

IOWA BIRD LIFE

IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION



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IOWA BIRD LIFE

The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. Iowa Bird Life and IOU News are quarterly publications of the Union.

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Note from the Editor

Stephen J. Dinsmore

I am pleased to assume my new role as the editor of *Iowa Bird Life* and thank out-going editor Kayleen A. Niyo for the nice introduction in the last issue. I sincerely appreciate the hard work of each of the journals past editors to make the journal what it is today. Kay, who retired as editor with the last issue of 2009, deserves special mention for her willingness to work with me during the transition to a new editor. She kindly provided me with detailed accounts of the formatting and production schedule for *Iowa Bird Life*, although I was almost overwhelmed by the dozens of emails I received in a couple of weeks last fall! I look forward to working with the experienced staff that Kay assembled, and do not foresee any immediate changes to the submission process or the appearance of the journal. I sincerely appreciate all that Kay has done for *Iowa Bird Life* and the Iowa Ornithologists' Union!

So, why did I volunteer to be the next editor? In short, I view *Iowa Bird Life* as a critical publication about birds in Iowa, I have a long-standing interest in writing and editing, and I was aware that people weren't tripping over each other to get the job! My background and skills in writing will hopefully serve me well in this role—I have a good knowledge of Iowa's birds and birders, I have been a frequent contributor to *Iowa Bird Life* for more than 25 years, and I have lots of editing experience.

As I begin my role as editor, I am reminded that this job would not be possible without the help of others. In particular, I am grateful to the editorial staff that are continuing their roles—Field Reports editors Aaron Brees, James J. Dinsmore, Paul Hertzel, and Matt Kenne; Birding Area editor Reid Allen; Book editor James J. Dinsmore; Christmas Bird Count editor Chris Caster; History editor Thomas H. Kent; and Iowa Birder editor Bob Cecil. The Publications Committee of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union oversees all of the organization's publications and provides important guidance for the publication of *Iowa Bird Life*. And of course I am indebted to everyone who contributes to *Iowa Bird Life*, from field reports submissions to writing articles. A journal is only as good as its submissions, so please continue to send material my way!

With this, my first issue as editor, I would like to take the opportunity to solicit new materials for *Iowa Bird Life*. In addition to regular features (Birding Areas articles, Meet an Iowa Birder, etc.), I welcome other submissions that deal with identification issues, historical aspects of birds in Iowa, the results of studies of Iowa's birds, editorials, and other topics that seem appropriate. All articles will be reviewed and published at the discretion of the editor. When submitting articles or photos, please carefully read and follow the Instructions to Authors information that is published on the inside back cover of *Iowa Bird Life*.

One thing you will notice in the latest journal is more color photos. The Iowa Ornithologists' Union Board of Directors approved adding more color to *Iowa Bird Life*, up to eight pages per issue for the upcoming year. I hope you will agree that this splash of color is a welcome addition to an already excellent journal. Thus, I am interested in receiving your high quality color photos of birds taken in Iowa for possible publication in the journal.

Please email your original, high resolution photos to me (cootjr@iastate.edu) along with a caption that includes the species, date, and location where the photo was taken. I will not accept hard copies of photos—it is up to you to scan the photo and forward an electronic version to me. This is a great opportunity to showcase the many excellent photographs of Iowa's birds!

Lastly, I want to emphasize that I would love to hear your thoughts about the content and appearance of *Iowa Bird Life*. What do you like about the journal? Do you have a suggestion for a new regular feature? Can you suggest any other changes you would like to see?

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Field Reports—Fall 2009

Paul Hertzel

WEATHER

The ornithological fall season spans the four month period from August through November. This year, August was cool, with no 90 degree temperatures after the 14th—the earliest end to 90 degree weather on record. At the same time, August was wetter than normal, resulting in widespread flooding in the southeast and record monthly totals at some locations (14.34 inches at Cedar Rapids). On the contrary, mild, even temperatures held throughout September, prompting the state climatologist to remark it was an “exceptionally pleasant month.” It set the unusual record of having the smallest range of temperatures for any historical September. Most of the state was dry for the first 20 days, but finally, a rain event during 21–25 September was nearly statewide.

The cool and wet August followed by a mild and dry September was a combination that repeated itself in October and November. It was the third coldest October on record, with early snow and temperatures in the teens even

Paul Hertzel

before the end of the 2nd week of the month. The cold was so persistent that the high temperature for the month was lower than that for any historical October. In addition, it was the 2nd wettest October ever, including many local records set for both snow and rain. Only 1881 was wetter. The unusual early snows included 6.7 inches at Underwood on the 10th. Then, both temperature and precipitation extremes reversed in November. Temperatures averaged 8.1 degrees above normal, making it the 4th warmest November on record. In fact, the high temperature of 77 degrees exceeded all temperatures recorded in October! The mild conditions were accompanied by a reprieve from the rain, and the month ended fairly dry with the only snowfall a mere trace.

BIRDS OF FALL

Habitat Conditions

The extremely wet conditions in August, aggravated further in October, filled wetlands, swelled rivers, and flooded fields. As a result, waterfowl habitat was plentiful making movements widespread, difficult to track, and slow. The warm November also seemed to delay the tail end of the migration, especially for migrant geese. A prominent north Iowa hunting guide said it was the worst season he could recall for finding game at persistent locations. It wasn't that birds were scarce, it was that they were unpredictable and hard to locate. A few waders that stayed through the tough conditions in October found November much more agreeable. A Cattle Egret stayed to a 2nd-latest date, and both American Bittern and White-faced Ibis made record-late dates. In addition, three species of terns stayed record late.

Particularly as a result of the wet August, most good shorebird habitat was flooded out and very few birds were found after the 15th of the month. In fact, there were over 6,000 shorebirds at Red Rock Res on 1 Aug, but only 752 counted in the entire state once the month was out. Dunlin, a typically late-arriving shorebird, apparently found conditions so unfavorable, only six stayed long enough to be noticed by Iowa birders, the lowest total in at least 15 years.

Other miscellaneous facts indicative of the quiet fall—only seven species of gulls were found in the state during the season, which may be compared to 12 found in the fall of 2008 and 13 in 2007; only one Snowy Owl was found, on the very last day of fall, compared with six found in fall a year ago; for the first time in 14 years, no Long-eared Owls were reported.

The passerine migration was described by some as light. In the northeast, Dennis Carter described warblers as "scarce." Although warbler diversity was about average (31 species), six species had only single reports. Of interest was the lateness of many of the dates. Nearly a fourth of the warbler species lingered to statistically late dates, including November dates for Orange-crowned, Nashville, and Ovenbird. At the same time, many sparrows arrived late. White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Harris's Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Fox Sparrow, Le Conte's Sparrow and Nelson's Sparrow all arrived after their median arrival dates of the last 20 years. Similarly, Rusty and Brewer's Blackbird both arrived later than their respective median arrival dates, and crossbills ignored the state altogether.

Unusual Species

There were very few rare species noted this fall season. Only two *accidental* species were recorded, and one of them was a pair of Mottled Ducks still lounging at Saylorville

Reservoir after their discovery during summer. Only three *casual* species were found, including two Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks that didn't survive their visit to Iowa when they were shot by a hunter near Fort Madison.

SPECIES DATA

All CAPS = Casual or Accidental species. * = documented. County names are in italics. Full names of contributors are at the end of the article. Abbreviations used: A = area, L = lake, M = marsh, m.ob. = many observers, NA = nature area, NM = National Monument, NWR = national wildlife refuge, P = park, R = river, RA = recreation area, Res = reservoir, SF = state forest, Sl = slough, SP = state park, USNWR = Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge, WPA = waterfowl production area, WA = wildlife area.

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-

DUCK: Two were shot by a hunter near Ft. Madison *Lee* 23 Sep (*Guy Zenner, Eric Van Ausdall-photo).

Greater White-fronted Goose: Twice, lone birds were found in Sep, one on the 12th in *Woodbury* (GLV, TLu) and one on the 20th in *Cedar* (CRE). The first migrant flocks arrived 8–10 Oct in *Decatur* (NJM) and *Dallas* (JB). High counts were 466 on 15 Oct at *DeSoto NWR Harrison* (USFWS waterfowl count) and about 500 on 26 Nov in *Pottawattamie* (MO). Also reported from *Polk*, *Warren* and *Poweshiek* (SJD, JS, MP).

Snow Goose: Groups of 225 on 26 Oct *Pottawattamie* (MO), 430 on 7 Nov *Sac* (SJD), 115 on 7 Nov *Decatur* (NJM), and 150 on 12 Nov *Harrison* indicated the migration was well under way. However, the truly large flocks went unnoticed in Iowa. By 30 Nov, there were at least 110,000 Snow Geese at *Squaw Creek NWR* in northwest Missouri, but the highest count observed in Iowa was 3,450 on 25 Nov *Pottawattamie* (MO). Another 1000 were seen

from the Von Ehwegen residence in Sioux City 29 Nov.

Ross's Goose: A single bird, possibly injured, was in *Waterworks Park Polk* in Sep (JS, JB). Otherwise, the first migrants were found 3–5 Nov in *Story* (WO), *Polk* (JG), and *Poweshiek* (MP). Some high counts were 11 on 19 Nov in *Poweshiek* (MO), 23 on 7 Nov in *Sac* (SJD), and 100 at the *Hitchcock NC Pottawattamie* 20 Nov (MO).

Cackling Goose: First few: 2 on 2 Oct in *Polk* (JB), 9 on 4 Oct in *Story* (SJD), and 1 on 9 Oct in *Cerro Gordo* (PH). The first large group was 480 on 1 Nov in *Clay* (LAS). The high count was 937 on 4 Nov at Ada Hayden P *Story* (SJD).

Canada Goose: The return of the tundra breeding *B. c. interior* in early Oct seemed about 2 weeks later than in recent years.

Mute Swan: The only report was 1 at *Ridgeway Sewage Ponds* in *Winneshiek* 19 Oct (DC).

Trumpeter Swan: After a summer with record numbers of breeding pairs (Dinsmore 2009a), few caught the attention of Iowa birders in the fall. There were only four reports, all of fewer than 10 birds, including an apparent family group in Ames 15 Nov (SJD).

Tundra Swan: Migrants first appeared along the upper Mississippi R 19 Oct (USFWS), and peaked at Pool #9 *Allamakee* when about 18,000 were estimated to be at that single location 27 Nov (RZ). Away from the big river, isolated sightings of 3 or fewer were found in late Nov in *Polk*, *Story* and *Hamilton* (SJD, WO, CG).

Wood Duck: Most: 598 on 15 Oct at *DeSoto NWR Harrison* (USFWS).

Gadwall: A single bird was at Say-

lorville Res *Polk* 4 Aug (SJD). Larger groups began to appear with 31 on 10 Oct in *Woodbury* (BFH) and 305 on 18 Oct in *Polk* (BE). The high counts were 5575 at Pool #9 *Allamakee* (USFWS), and 1510 on 31 Oct at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD).

American Wigeon: High counts were 2000 on 5 Oct at Pool #9 *Allamakee* (USFWS) and 811 on 21 Oct at DeSoto NWR *Harrison*.

American Black Duck: The first was 1 on 12 Nov in *Story* (SJD). As many as 6 were found along the Mississippi R in *Allamakee* 27 Nov (JG).

MOTTLED DUCK: Two found during summer lingered at Saylorville Res *Polk* through 5 Aug (SJD, JG).

Blue-winged Teal: Peaked in late Sep with 1000 counted at Saylorville Res *Polk* 24 Sep (CG).

Northern Shoveler: Most: 280 at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* 9 Oct (AB).

Northern Pintail: One early individual was found at Saylorville Res *Polk* 21 Aug (SJD). By 30 Sep, as many as 50 were at Coffey M *Wayne* (RLC). The most was 844 at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* 21 Oct.

Green-winged Teal: Began gathering in numbers in late Sep (RLC). By 24 Oct 1346 were counted at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), and 2129 were at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* 29 Oct. The last large group was 225 at Polk City WA *Polk* 15 Nov (JB).

Canvasback: An occasional Iowa nester, two Canvasback found at Alden *Hardin* 15 Sep (MP) may have attempted to nest somewhere nearby. The annual spectacle of migration along the Mississippi R began in mid-Oct, and by the 27th 206,400 were counted at Pool #9 *Allamakee*. But that was only a prelude to the peak count of 337,450 on 9 Nov (USFWS).

Redhead: Most: 103 on 31 Oct at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

Ring-necked Duck: The summer pat-

tern of scattered ones and twos continued into mid-Oct (TLu, BFH, BSc, JB). Then numbers abruptly built late in the month with 700 at Saylorville (AB, SJD), and 2928 at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD). By 3 Nov there were 8350 in *Allamakee* where the peak of 12,435 was recorded 9 Nov (USFWS).

Greater Scaup: The first report was 8 at Ada Hayden P *Story* on 8 Nov (CG). All others – 2 on 17 Nov at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (RG), 2 on 26 Nov at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), 2 on 27 Nov at Pool #13 *Clinton* (JG), and 1 on 28 Nov at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB).

Lesser Scaup: The first large concentration in the interior of the state was 3200 at Saylorville on 31 Oct (AB, SJD). The high count was 127,000 on 9 Nov at Pool #9 *Allamakee* (USFWS).

Surf Scoter: There were 11 reports from 9 locations, involving 14 birds, which is about the 5-year average. All but one were immature/female types (SJD, JG, LAS, JF, DB, BSc).

White-winged Scoter: Seven reports of 15 birds were the most since 2003. A couple of small groups were 4 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 26 Oct (SJD, AB), and up to 5 at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* 7–27 Nov (RG, CJF, JB).

Black Scoter: All: 1–4 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 31 Oct–7 Nov (SJD, JG, AB), 2 at Spirit L *Dickinson* 7 Nov (SJD), 1 at Red Rock Res *Marion* 28 Nov (AB), and 1 at Eagle Point *Clinton* 29 Nov (CRE).

Long-tailed Duck: All: 1 female/imm. on 1 Nov at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS), 1 on 7 Nov at Pool #9 *Allamakee* (Nick Anich fide SJD), 1 imm. on 11 Nov at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB), and 1 adult male on 25 Nov at Brushy Creek RA *Webster* (SJD).

Bufflehead: First: 2 on 10 Oct at Sandhill L *Woodbury* (TLu). In the vicinity of Pool #9 *Allamakee* on 18 Nov a possible

world record count of 8620 was compiled by USFWS staff (Bob Russell). Elsewhere, the most was 220 on 26 Nov at Saylorville Res Polk (SJD).

Common Goldeneye: The first was 1 on 8 Nov at Cedar L Linn (BSc). The high count along the Mississippi R was 4900 on 19 Nov (USFWS).

Hooded Merganser: The high count was a mere 10 on 8 Nov at Saylorville Res Polk (JB).

Common Merganser: 49 at DeSoto NWR Harrison on 21 Oct were 2nd-earliest; the most was 130 there on 26 Nov (USFWS).

Red-breasted Merganser: The first report was 8 on 23 Oct in the drizzle at Pleasant Creek Linn (BSc). High counts were 93 on 16 Nov at Saylorville Res Polk (JG, SJD) and 20 on 21 Nov at Rathbun L Appanoose (TJ).

Ruddy Duck: Two migrants appeared in the east on 2 Oct at Cedar L Linn (BSc). Some peak counts were 766 at Red Rock Res Marion (JG) and 908 at Saylorville Res Polk (SJD) both on 24 Oct, 431 on 1 Nov at Lost Island L Palo Alto (LAS), and 720 on 27 Nov at Pool #9 Allamakee (JG).

Gray Partridge: Reported from Black Hawk, Clay, Greene, Kossuth, Mitchell, Winnebago, and Worth, all in the north half of the state. High counts were 12 on 24 Aug in Black Hawk (MWJ) and another 12 on 5 Oct in Kossuth (Craig Zoellner).

Ruffed Grouse: There were two reports from south-central Iowa—one in Decatur on 24 Aug (Matthew Torres) and Stephens SF Lucas on 9 Sep (JS).

Northern Bobwhite: Reported from Adams, Appanoose, Decatur, Harrison, Jefferson, Linn and Marion, all in the south half of the state. The high count was 30 on 1 Sep in Appanoose (RLC).

Red-throated Loon: The first was 1 juv on 18 Oct at Red Rock Res Marion

on (JG). At least two distinct juv were at Saylorville Res Polk 10–28 Nov (SJD, AB, CG, JWR JG, JB, NJM). 1 or 2 juv were at Coralville L Johnson 11–21 Nov (JLF, CRE, JES). Another was at Pool #9 Allamakee 15 Nov (RZ).

Pacific Loon: A juv was at L Corneilia Wright 7 Nov (SJD), and another was at Saylorville Res Polk 8–16 Nov (BE, JB, AB, CG, SJD, DTh).

Common Loon: After scattered summer sightings (Dinsmore 2009a), there were no Aug or Sep reports. The first few fall birds appeared in mid-Oct at Red Rock Res Marion on 16 Oct (JB), 2 at Saylorville Res Polk on 19 Oct (JG), and another at Clear L Cerro Gordo 21 Oct (RG). Then, abruptly on 1 Nov, as many as 121 appeared at the south end of Saylorville between the dam and Cherry Glen (BE, RLC) and numbers peaked there when 283 were counted on 15 Nov (CG). Handfuls in the second half of Nov were also reported from Cerro Gordo, Appanoose and Black Hawk (CJF, JB, DE, JF). Three were still at Saylorville 29 Nov (AB).

Pied-billed Grebe: Began gathering in mid-Sep (GLV, TLu) and by the end of the month 524 were at Saylorville Res Polk (AB). Another 103 were at Spirit L Dickinson



Pacific Loon, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, 8 November 2009. Photo by Aaron Brees, Des Moines, IA.

on 11 Oct (SJD). Peaked on 20 Oct with 625 at Saylorville (JG, SJD, AB).

Horned Grebe: On 9 Oct, the first was a group of 17 at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* and also 16 at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB, SJD). One at Decorah Winneshiek 19 Oct was a first fall record there according to DC. The highest counts were 30 at Rathbun L *Appanoose* 18 Nov (JF) and 31 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 17 Nov (JG).

Red-necked Grebe: All: Singles were at Dairy Ponds Woodbury 7 Sep (JG), Clear L *Cerro Gordo* 17 Nov (CJF), Rathbun L *Appanoose* 18 Nov (JF), and Red Rock Res Marion 19–21 Nov (JF, CG).

Eared Grebe: The first was at Dairy Ponds Woodbury on 7 Sep (JG). In October, 1 was at Spirit L *Dickinson* on the 11th (SJD), and another at Saylorville Res *Polk* 20–24 Oct (SJD). Finally, 4 were at Spirit L on 1 Nov (LAS).

Western Grebe: Following the last summer sighting on 13 Jul in *Dickinson* (Dinsmore 2009a), August passed with no reports. The first in fall were 4 on 6 Sep at Union Hills *Cerro Gordo* (Paul Willis). After that, 1 or 2 were found at Red Rock Res Marion 16 Oct through the end of the season (JB, JG, SJD, CG, JF, AB), 1 was at Rathbun L *Appanoose* 18 Oct (SJD), 1 was at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* 25 Oct (JJD), and 1 was at Pleasant Creek SP Linn 25–27 Oct (BSc, BT).

American White Pelican: Peak counts of 3142 on 6 Aug at Red Rock Res Marion (SJD), ~2000 on 6 Sep at Union Hills *Cerro Gordo* (Paul Willis), and 1798 on 1 Sep at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) were considerably less than typical and the lowest since 2001. Very few lingered past mid-Oct with the exception of a small pocket below the dam at Red Rock Res Marion still numbering 220 on 22 Nov (JS).

Double-crested Cormorant: High

counts were 1623 on 28 Sep *Pottawattamie* (MO) and 1626 on 9 Oct at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD). Still around in late Nov were 9 in *Adams* and 2 in *Polk* on the 28th (SJD, MHB), and 1 in *Linn* on the 30th (BT).

American Bittern: Following two on 28 Oct at Errington Marsh in *Polk* (RTr), a fall record late bird was at Saylorville Res *Polk* on 27 Nov (JOb). There are a few Dec and Jan records.

Least Bittern: At least one family group discovered in late Aug at Union Sl NWR in *Kossuth* indicated successful breeding there for the second year in a row (MCK). The last was 1 on 4 Oct at Hiawatha Linn (BSc).

Great Blue Heron: As many as 235 were scattered around Red Rock Res Marion 6 Aug (SJD).

Great Egret: Peak counts occurred in the first half of Aug with 186 at Runnels *Warren*, 181 at Red Rock Res Marion, and 155 at Chichaqua WA *Polk* (SJD). Numbers quickly fell, and the high count for October was 19 on the 7th in *Decatur* (NJM). The last was 1 on 28 Oct at Diehl Wetlands *Warren* (JS).

Snowy Egret: All: A juv at Red Rock Res Marion 6–14 Aug (SJD, DTh, JG), 1 at Hawkeye WA Johnson 11 Aug (JLF), and 4 at Blue Wing M Palo Alto 29 Aug (LAS).

Little Blue Heron: All: A juv at Chichaqua WA *Polk* 9–22 Aug (SJD, JG), a juv at Dewey's Pasture Palo Alto 29 Aug (LAS), and 3 along the Raccoon R Dallas 13 Sep (TL).

Cattle Egret: Only four reports, and no significant groups. 1 was in the Boxcars area of Marion 13 Sep (AB), another single was found in Benton 21 Oct (JJD, SJD), 2 were in Des Moines *Polk* 21 Oct (KVS), and a 2nd-latest individual was near Johnston *Polk* 22 Nov (DTh, JB-photo).

Green Heron: The last 2 were at Nicholson Ford Marshall 3 Oct (MP).



Cattle Egret, east of Grimes, Polk, 21 November 2009. Photograph by John Bissell, Grimes, IA.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: Five reports of single birds – 9 Aug Polk (KVS), 15 Aug Keokuk (BSc, CRE), 30 Aug Kosuth (MCK), 5 Sep Story (WO), and 10 Oct Woodbury (TLu).

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: A juv was at Chichaqua WA Polk on 22 Aug (SJD), and 1 was at Bacon Creek Woodbury 27 Aug (GLV).

White-faced Ibis: Reported only in the far west. In southwest Woodbury up to seven birds moved between four wetlands – Luton, Owego, Table Marsh and Sandhill L. On 10 Oct, 5 still at Table M and 2 at Owego were record late (GLV, TLu). The next day all were gone, but may have passed through Page directly south where 1 was seen at Rapp P 11 Oct (KDy).

Turkey Vulture: The most was 150 on 20 Sep in Johnson (CRE), but peak movements were about three weeks later. 332 were counted on 8 Oct at Hitchcock Pottawattamie, where the last was 1 on 12 Nov (MO).

Osprey: After a successful summer season (Dinsmore 2009a), the species was

widely reported in Aug and Sep. The principal migration window was 19–28 Sep when 50% of all birds counted at Hitchcock passed the observation deck and also both of the twin high counts occurred at Grammar Grove (MO, MP). The last was below the Saylorville dam Polk 31 Oct (JB).

Mississippi Kite: No migrants were found in the state during the fall. The only reports were individuals seen in the skies over the city of Des Moines Polk through 2 Sep, where there is a small, isolated nesting population (MHB, TJ, JB).

Bald Eagle: Widely reported in ones and twos until mid-Nov. By 15 Nov as many as 200 had arrived at Pool #9 Allamakee (RZ). At the two hawk watches, peak flights occurred in the final days of the season and into early Dec (MO, MP).

Northern Harrier: Reports were very widespread, with the last two weeks of October accounting for 53% of all IOU reports. Over the same period, the Hitchcock hawk watch recorded 68% of their season total, including a single-day record 138 birds on 23 Oct (MO). The next day JS found 9 in Warren.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: First few: 1 on 29 Aug in Pottawattamie (MO), 1 on 13 Sep at Saylorville Res Polk (JB), and 3 on 26 Sep at Lime Creek Cerro Gordo (PH). Hitchcock hawk watch established a new season record 1273 and a single day record 237 on 20 Oct (MO). The peak movement at Grammar Grove Marshall was 24 Oct when 64 were counted (MP), and JS recorded 16 in Warren the same day.

Cooper's Hawk: Two young were beginning for food at Big Creek Polk 9 Aug (DTh). There were reports from ten other locations. Numbers at Grammar Grove Marshall were down (MP), but 277 was a new season record total at Hitchcock hawk watch Pottawattamie (MO) in the west.

Northern Goshawk: Reported from 8 locations, starting with a juv on 22 Sep at Wa-shaw-tee *Fremont* (KDy), and another on 26 Sep at Lime Creek *Cerro Gordo* (RG). Also reported in *Boone*, *Decatur*, *Hancock*, *Polk*, *Pottawattamie* and *Woodbury* (JWR, NJM, RG, TLu, MO, GLV, BHF, DB). The season total of 11 at Hitchcock was a new record, and included 4 on the same day, 23 Oct (MO).

Red-shouldered Hawk: Reported from twelve locations, all single birds except for several apparent family groups in *Black Hawk* (DE).

Broad-winged Hawk: At Grammar Grove in *Marshall*, the season total of 1417 was the 2nd-highest in 20 years (MP). Ken Gregory counted 723 there in one hour's time 27 Sep. A bit northeast of there, 2864 were counted in a single day on 26 Sep at *Palisades-Kepler SP* in *Linn* (SJD). In the west, where 82% of the season total at Hitchcock passed during 22–27 Sep, the last of the season was seen 7 Oct (MO).

Swainson's Hawk: The flight at Hitchcock was the second-lowest in 10 years, producing only 248 individuals (MO). In fact, for the third straight year, Broad-winged Hawks outnumbered Swainson's Hawks at Hitchcock, after five consecutive years of the opposite relationship. The only other reports in the state came from Lime Creek *Cerro Gordo* 26, 27 Sep during a weekend hawk watch (PH, RG).

Red-tailed Hawk: A Krider's in *Marion* and Harlan's in *Warren* and *Kossuth* were among the many reports (JG, MCK). At Hitchcock, Krider's made up less than 1% of the total, and Harlan's almost exactly 1%. 933 Red-tails counted there on 23 Oct was a single day record total, and the season total of 4039 was the 2nd-most (MO).

Rough-legged Hawk: The first few were singles on 13 Oct in *Story* (CG), 19

Oct in *Decatur* (NJM), 25 Oct in *Decatur* and *Woodbury* (JRL).

Golden Eagle: The first was record early on 12 Sep in *Pottawattamie* (MO). There were five reports away from Hitchcock NA – 1 on 28 Sep and another 31 Oct at *Grammar Grove Marshall* (MP), 3 on 7 Nov at *New Albin Allamakee* (Nick Anich fide SJD) and another on 26 Nov (JG), and 1 on 11 Nov in *Decatur* (NJM). There were 17 on the season at Hitchcock in the Loess Hills (MO).

American Kestrel: The flight peaked in late Sep and early Oct. The most was 38 on 1 Oct in *Decatur* (NJM).

Merlin: The first was 3rd-earliest on 20 Aug in *Pottawattamie* (MO), followed by 1 on 30 Aug in *Polk* (JG). Of the seven identified to race, 5 were *columbarius* (JG, MCK, LAS, SJD, BSc). Arrivals at the traditional winter roost in Glendale Cemetery in Des Moines *Polk* were first noticed on 4 Nov (RIC). The 87 counted at Hitchcock was a season record total, and 19 on 23 Oct was a single day record total (MO).

Peregrine Falcon: Reported from ten locations in *Cerro Gordo*, *Decatur*, *Marion*, *Marshall*, *Polk*, *Pottawattamie* and *Winnesheik*.

Prairie Falcon: On 24 Oct, there were two widely separated reports: 1 was at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (DJN-details), and 1 flew past the Hitchcock hawk watch platform *Pottawattamie* (MO).

Yellow Rail: Migrants were reported from six different locations in *Dallas*, *Story*, *Boone*, *Marshall* and *Polk* between 11 Sep and 9 Oct (TL, CG, MP, SJD), including 3 flushed from in front of a mower in *Marshall* 3 Oct (CK).

KING RAIL: An adult with four young was found at Chichaqua WA *Polk* on 6 Aug (*DK).

Virginia Rail: All: 1 on 23 Sep at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK), and 2 on 26 Sep at Snake Creek M *Greene* (CG).

Sora: As many as 12 were seen 23 Sep in *Kossuth*, and 26 Sep in *Appanoose* (MCK, RLC). Last was 1 at Sedan *Appanoose* 17 Oct (JG).

Common Moorhen: No reports.

American Coot: The largest gathering was 17,308 counted on Spirit L *Dickinson* 11 Oct (SJD). On 1 Nov there were still 7000 at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE).

Sandhill Crane: All: 6 at Chichaqua WA *Polk* 12–22 Aug (SJD), up to 7 at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* 18–22 Aug (DC, BT), up to 4 at Otter Creek M *Tama* 7 Sep–5 Oct (SJD, MP), 1 on 16 Sep at Crystal Hills WA *Hancock* (RG), on 21 Oct 4 in *Black Hawk* and groups of 3 and 5 in *Buchanan* (JJD, SJD), 2 on 11 Nov in *Polk* (DK), 2 in *Allamakee* 15–27 Nov (RG, DC, JG), and 6 at Pleasant Creek *Linn* 28 Nov (BSc).

Black-bellied Plover: In August: 2 on the 10th at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JLF), 6 on the 15th at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), 3 on the 18th at Saylorville Res *Polk* (CG), and 2 on 22–25 Aug at Credit I *Scott* (WMZ). All others: 2 on 18 Sep in *Hardin* (MP), and 1 or 2 at Saylorville Res *Polk* through 20 Oct (AB, SJD).

American Golden-Plover: 1 was at Banner WA *Warren* 8 Aug (JG), then 2–13 at Saylorville Res *Polk* throughout Sep (m.ob). All others: 26 on 25 Sep in *Woodbury* (TLu), 16 on 27 Sep in *Kossuth* (MCK), 2 on 1 Oct in *Poweshiek* (MPR), 19 on 11 Oct in *Pocahontas* (SJD), and 71 on 28 Oct in *Iowa* (SJD).

Semipalmated Plover: 264 were counted during the month of August including 77 on 4 Aug at Saylorville Res *Polk* and 85 on 15 Aug at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), and then a mere 9 were found the rest of the season. The last few were 3 on 11

Oct at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH), and 1 at Rathbun L *Appanoose* 18 Oct (MP).

Piping Plover: All: Two adults on 1 Aug, one at Red Rock Res *Marion* and another at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), 1 on 4 Aug at Banner WA *Warren* (JS), 1 on 15 Aug at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JLF), a juv at Red Rock Res *Marion* 23 Aug (SJD, JG), and another juv at Rathbun L *Appanoose* 26 Aug (RLC).

Killdeer: The most was 434 on 11 Aug at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD). One was still at Cedar L *Linn* 28 Nov (BSc).

American Avocet: All: 3 on 1 Aug at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), 2 on 1 Aug at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), 1 on 17 Aug at Gray's L *Polk* (JB), 1 on 28 Aug at Ada Hayden P *Story* and 5 there on 17 Sep (WO), 1 at Table M *Woodbury* 10–19 Oct (GLV, TLu), 1 at Green Bay Bottoms *Lee* on 23 Oct (JWR), and 2–6 at Saylorville Res *Polk* until 31 Oct (AB, CG, JB, SJD).

Spotted Sandpiper: The last was a juv on 24 Oct at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

Solitary Sandpiper: Most: 32 on 1 Aug in *Decatur* (NJM). All the rest were singles, with the last on 10 Oct in *Linn* (BSc).

Greater Yellowlegs: There were only a handful of reports of six or fewer, with the last 1 on 16 Nov at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

Willet: There were four mid-Aug reports: 1 on 14 Aug at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), 1 on 16 Aug at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JG), 2 on 18 Aug at Dairy Ponds *Woodbury* (GLV), and 4 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 18 Aug (CG).

Lesser Yellowlegs. The occurrences of this species exemplified the shorebird season which was largely flooded out with heavy Aug rains. There were 496 counted at Red Rock Res *Marion* on 1 Aug (SJD), and 22 birds counted in the entire state after that. The last two sightings were 2 on 5 Nov

in rural Greene (TMH) and 1 on 12 Nov at DeSoto NWR in Harrison (USFWS).

Upland Sandpiper: All: 5 on 4 Aug at Saylorville Res Polk (SJD), 1 on 8 Aug at Pinchey Marion (DTh), and 1 in northern Polk on 18 Aug (DK).

WHIMBREL: One was found at Hawkeye WA Johnson on 23 Aug (*JPa).

Hudsonian Godwit: The only one was at Hawkeye WA Johnson on 11 Aug (JLF).

Ruddy Turnstone: All: 1–3 adults at Red Rock Res Marion 1–15 Aug (SJD), 2 on 10 Aug at Hawkeye WA Johnson (JLF), and 1–3 at Saylorville Res Polk 16–18 Aug (JG, JB, CG).

RED KNOT: An adult was at Saylorville Res Polk 23 Aug (SJD).

Sanderling: All: 2 on 1 Aug at Hawkeye WA Johnson (JF), 2 on 19 Sep in Marion (JS), 1 on 26 Sep at Credit I Scott (WMZ), 1 at Rathbun L Appanoose 17 Oct (CRE), and 1–3 at Saylorville Res Polk 2 Aug–24 Oct (JB, JG, TJ).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: All: 498 on 1 Aug at Red Rock Res Marion (SJD), up to 147 at Saylorville Res Polk 2–4 Aug (AB, SJD), and 20 on 23 Aug at Rathbun L Appanoose (RLC). This is the first time since I have been writing the fall report (nine years) that reports ended before the end of Aug.

Western Sandpiper: Two juvs were at Red Rock Res Marion 14, 15 Aug (SJD-photos, JG, CG) and another was at Saylorville Res Polk 22 Aug (TJ).

Least Sandpiper: High counts were 442 on 1 Aug at Red Rock Res Marion and 462 on 4 Aug at Saylorville Res Polk (SJD). 220 were still at Saylorville Res Polk on 29



Western Sandpiper, Red Rock Reservoir, Marion, 14 August 2009. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

Aug (AB), but after that, no reports involved more than 10 birds. Last were 3 along Lewis Bottoms Road Linn 10 Oct (BSc, BT).

White-rumped Sandpiper: Details would be helpful with reports of this very rare fall migrant, photos even better. There was one report from 26 Aug.

Baird's Sandpiper: Reported in very small numbers through 13 Oct from Appanoose, Cerro Gordo, Clay, Decatur and Polk (m.ob). The most was 17 on 6 Sep at Saylorville Res Polk (SJD).

Pectoral Sandpiper: 4293 were at Red Rock Res Marion on 1 Aug, and another 1345 were at Saylorville Res Polk 2 Aug (SJD). After an extremely wet Aug came to an end, only 13 more birds were reported in the entire state. Last was 1 at Sand L Marshall 8 Nov (MP).

Dunlin: 4 were at Rathbun L Appanoose (MP) on 17 Oct, and 2 were at Cedar L Linn on 20 Oct (BSc). These six birds made the lowest statewide season total in at least 15 years.

Stilt Sandpiper: The only large concentrations were in Marion along the Des Moines R and at Red Rock Res. 363 were there 1 Aug (SJD), and up 201 13–19 Sep

(AB, JS). All other reports were of single birds except the last, which was 5 on 12 Oct at Table M Woodbury (TLu).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: Reappeared in late summer at Saylorville Res Polk (Din-smore 2009a) where the high count of 12 occurred on the first day of the fall season (SJD, AB). Also in Aug, 3 on the 8th at a sod farm in Linn (BSc), up to 5 at Red Rock Res Marion (SJD), 1 along the Des Moines R Marion (JG), and 2 at Rathbun L Appanoose (RLC). The only Sep record was 1 on 17–20 Sep at Saylorville Res Polk (CG, AB).

Short-billed Dowitcher: All: 1 on 10 Aug at Dairy Ponds Woodbury (TLu), and 2 on 29 Aug at Saylorville Res Polk (AB).

Long-billed Dowitcher: One identified by call on 14 Aug at Red Rock Res Marion (SJD) was 40 days before the next report. Long-billed Dowitcher was one of the few late-season shorebirds found in any numbers, with 95% of the 153 individuals occurring in October. A few high counts were 33 on 11 Oct at Rapp P Page (KDy), 32 on 12 Oct at Table M Woodbury (TLu), and 43 on 15 Oct at DeSoto NWR (USF-WS). The only Nov report was 2 on the 1st in Diehl Wetlands Warren (JS).

Wilson's Snipe: The high count was a mere 20 on 17 Oct at Sedan Appanoose (JB), and the last was 19 on 23 Oct at Rapp P Page (KDy).

American Woodcock: The only report was 1 on 4 Nov at Ankeny Polk (AB).

Wilson's Phalarope: All: 6 At Red Rock Res Marion 1–15 Aug (SJD), 1 on 1 Aug in Decatur (NJM), 3 on 4 Aug at Saylorville Res Polk (SJD), and the last 1 on 21 Aug at Saylorville Res Polk (SJD).

Red-necked Phalarope: All: At least 1 juv at Red Rock Res Marion 6–23 Aug (SJD, JG), 3 juvs and 5 adults at Saylorville Res Polk 21–23 Aug (SJD) and another there 11 Sep (AB), 1 juv on 27 Aug at Cedar L

Chickasaw (SJD), 3 on 8 Sep at Hubbard sewage lagoon Hardin (MP), and 1 on 11 Oct at Spirit L Dickinson (SJD-photo) which was 3rd-latest.

Sabine's Gull: Very scarce this fall with only four individuals reported—a juv at Saylorville Res Polk 29 Sep (SJD), another juv at Blackhawk L Sac 1 Oct (JWR), and two, an adult and a juv, at Red Rock Res Marion 18 Oct, (JG, AMJ, MP, CRE).

Bonaparte's Gull: The first, an immature on 1 Sep at Alden Hardin (MP), was more than a month ahead of the next on 10 Oct (BSc). Never occurring in large numbers, 30 on 19 Oct at Saylorville Res Polk (AB), 34 on 31 Oct at Red Rock Res Marion



Adult Sabine's Gull, Red Rock Reservoir, Marion, 18 October 2009. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.

(SJD), and 39 on 16 Nov at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) were the high counts. The last were 3 on 21 Nov at Red Rock Res *Marion* (CG).

BLACK-HEADED GULL: The Spirit L *Dickinson* adult was last seen 25 Oct flying around the northeast corner of the lake (JG).

Franklin's Gull: In late Sep, counts of 1750 in *Pottawattamie*, 4125 in *Marion* and 2990 in *Polk* indicated the first significant movements (MO, JG, SJD). The peak was 22,000 on 9 Oct at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), but there were no other counts near that total. 1200 were at Rathbun L *Appanoose* on 21 Nov (TJ) was a very late date for so many. Three were still at Saylorville Res *Polk* 28 Nov (SJD).

Ring-billed Gull: No one reported more than the 791 at Red Rock Res *Marion* on 6 Aug (SJD), a smaller number even than the summer high count (Dinsmore 2009a).

Herring Gull: All: A first alternate was at Red Rock Res *Marion* 1 Aug (SJD), 1 was at Saylorville Res *Polk* 16 Aug (DTh), a 3rd-year individual was at Cedar L *Linn* 10 Oct, and 4 were found at Red Rock Res *Marion* 16 Oct (TLu, JB).

Thayer's Gull: No reports.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: An adult was at Coralville Res *Johnson* 10–27 Oct (JF, JES), and 3rd-year bird was at Cedar L *Linn* 1, 2 Nov (BSc-details, BT).

Least Tern: The only report was 1 on 10 Aug at Dairy Ponds *Woodbury*, about 9 miles from the traditional nesting location (TLu).

Caspian Tern: Most were found at Saylorville Res *Polk* 2 Aug–4 Oct where the most was 55 on 27 Aug (AB). Also – 15 at Gray's L *Polk* 26 Aug (JB), 1 on 4 Sep at Pine L *Hardin* (MP), 8 at Cedar L *Linn* 8 Sep (BT), and 6 at Ada Hayden P *Story* 13 Sep (WO).

The last 2 were at Saylorville Res *Polk* 4 Oct (SJD).

Black Tern: Pretty much gone from the state by 24 Sep, except for one lone juv found haunting Saylorville Res *Polk* 16–20 Oct, a record late date (SJD).

Common Tern: In Aug and Sep there were 3 juvs and 1 adult found in the central part of the state (SJD, JG). On 17 Oct, an adult was at Rathbun L *Appanoose* (SJD, TLu, MP, CRE), a 3rd-latest date. Finally, a first Nov record was found at Red Rock Res *Marion* 3 Nov (JWR).

Forster's Tern: The most was 22 on 11 Aug at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD). In late Oct, 2 were still at Ada Hayden P *Story*, and were likely recorded again on 1 Nov. In any case, at least 1 was still there on 9 Nov (WO), making it the third species of tern to stay record late this season.

Eurasian Collared-Dove: 1 in *Chickasaw* and 2 in *Floyd* apparently add two more counties to the list of those included in the range expansion of this species.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: The last few were 3 on 25 Sep in *Monona*, including an adult still feeding young (AB), and 1 in *Decatur* on 26 Sep (NJM).

Black-billed Cuckoo: Three distinct birds were found in *Polk* in early Aug (AB, JG, SJD), followed by 1 at AA Call SP *Kossuth* 30 Aug (MCK), and the last on 12 Sep at Sedan *Appanoose* (RLC).

Eastern Screech-Owl: Individuals were found in *Story*, *Woodbury*, *Fremont* and *Marion* (WO, GLV, KDy, JB), and 3 were found in *Decatur* (NJM).

Snowy Owl: HZ found the first and only on 30 Nov, the last day of fall, near McCall'sburg *Story*, a very white individual (HZ, CG).

Long-eared Owl: For the first time in 14 years, no one reported a Long-eared Owl in Iowa during the fall.

Short-eared Owl: All: At least 1 at Neal Smith NWR Jasper 13 Oct to the end of the season (DJN, KVS, CG), 1 at the Kurtz farm in W Marshall on 18 Oct (CK), 1 on 21 Oct near Napier Boone (DJN), 1 on 21 Oct in Kossuth (MCK), 1 in Decatur 30 Oct (NJM), and 1 in Pottawattamie 14 Nov (MO).

Northern Saw-whet Owl: An impressive total of 39 Northern Saw-whet Owls were captured and banded at Hitchcock NC (see article this issue), with the first on 15 Oct (JT, MO). Also, 1 was at Moorehead P Ida 31 Oct (DoP), and 1 was at Elk Rock SP Marion 29 Nov (JS).

Common Nighthawk: Most: 790 in the skies over Mason City Cerro Gordo 12 Sep (PH). Last: 2 on 21 Oct in Des Moines Polk (KVS) were 4th-latest.

Whip-poor-will: All: 1 on 11 Aug in Mason City Cerro Gordo (RG), and 1 calling near Rathbun L Appanoose 18 Sep (DT).

Chimney Swift: Stayed unusually late this fall. The median departure date over the last 20 years is 13 Oct, but birds were still being seen in Jefferson and Story on 18 Oct (DCP, CG). On 21 Oct, CF counted about 100 still over Burlington Des Moines, and 4 were in Des Moines Polk on the same date (RIC).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: On 12 Oct, 1 was observed still in Kossuth "in the falling snow" (MCK), and another succumbed to the unusual early-winter conditions in Boone (LGD). Four days later, on 16 Oct, the last was seen in Ames Story (SJD).

Red-headed Woodpecker: 1860 migrants counted at Hitchcock NA Pottawattamie was a new season record total and included 521 counted in flight on 6 Sep (MO).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: First noticed away from likely breeding areas in mid-Sep with 1 in Linn and another in Story, both on the 18th (BT, CG). Also reported in

Allamakee, Appanoose, Jefferson, Lyon, Marion, Marshall, Polk, Poweshiek, Warren and Woodbury through the end of the season.

Northern Flicker: Four red-shafted individuals were reported, in Pottawattamie, Fremont and Page (JS, KDy), all in the far west.

Pileated Woodpecker: Reported from sixteen east and central counties, including a family group at Waterworks P Polk (JB).

Olive-sided Flycatcher: The first was found 10 Aug at Ledges SP Boone (DCH), followed by 1 near Fairfield Jefferson 21 Aug (DCP). Most reports occurred during the 2-week period between 29 Aug–13 Sep. Last was 1 on 26 Sep in Algona (MCK).

Eastern Wood-Pewee: RLC counted 12 at Sharon Bluffs SP Appanoose 29 Aug. The last was 1 in Decatur on 1 Oct (JRL, NJM).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: The first three were found on 27 Aug in Howard and Chickasaw (SJD). Last was 1 at Brookside P Story on 16 Sep (CG).

Acadian Flycatcher: No reports.

Alder Flycatcher: Three individuals were still present at a nest site in Dallas 5 Aug (see Dinsmore 2009b). The first likely migrant was 1 on 9 Aug in Decatur (NJM). The last heard calling were 2 on 29 Aug at Wickiup Linn (BT).

Willow Flycatcher: Last was 1 on 23 Aug Kossuth (MCK-details) followed by 4 on 5 Sep in Lucas (RLC-details).

Least Flycatcher: Reported from ten counties during Aug–Sep. Last with details, 2 on 26 Sep in Algona (MCK).

Eastern Phoebe: The last was 1 at Calmar Winneshiek 31 Oct (Larry Reis fide DC), a rather late date for that county (DC).

Great Crested Flycatcher: The last was 1 on 30 Sep at Squaw Creek P Linn (BSc).

Western Kingbird: The only report

was 1 on 21 Aug at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

Eastern Kingbird: No one reported any large movements or concentrations of migrants. The last 3 were at Grammar Grove Marshall on 13 Sep (MP).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: A second Woodbury record was present near Luton 25, 26 Oct (TLu-photo, BH, GV), which was also a 3rd-latest date for the state of Iowa.

Loggerhead Shrike: Not reported in the north half of the state after Aug.

Northern Shrike: The first few were 1 on 25 Oct at Owego Woodbury (TLu), 1 on 28 Oct in Kossuth (RG), and 1 in Winneshiek on 28 Oct (DC). Eventually reported as far south as Cass, Warren and Page (JS, AMJ, SJD, KDy).

White-eyed Vireo: Five late summer



Northern Shrike, near Anita, Cass, 28 November 2009. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

birds were found within their usual range – 6 Aug and 4 Sep in *Polk* (DK, DJN), 11 Aug in *Marion* (SJD), 12 Sep in *Lucas* (JS) and 14 Sep in *Jefferson* (DCP).

Bell's Vireo: As many as 6 were counted near Rathbun L *Appanoose* 22 Aug (RLC, JG). The last was next door in *Lucas* on 5 Sep (RLC).

Yellow-throated Vireo: The last, on 30 Sep at Decorah Winneshiek, was record late for that area (DC).

Blue-headed Vireo: The first was noticed on 16 Sep at Liscomb Marshall (MP), and the last was at George Wyth SP *Black Hawk* 21 Oct (SJD).

Warbling Vireo: One was still singing on 25 Sep in Cedar Rapids *Linn* (BT). The last one seen was the next day, 26 Sep, at Grammar Grove Marshall (MP).

Philadelphia Vireo: The 4-day period 24–27 Sep ended the season while producing a flurry of 9 reports involving 18 birds (m.ob.) including 5 counted at Red Rock Res *Marion* on the 27th (JG).

Red-eyed Vireo: Left the state the same day as Philadelphia Vireo, 27 Sep: 1 was at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), and 5 were at Emma McCarthy Lee Park *Story* (CG).

Blue Jay: Some of the Blue Jays at your winter feeder may have come from Fargo or Duluth or Bayfield. 260 migrants were counted on 24 Sep in Algona *Kossuth* (MCK), and 1200 were counted in flight on 4 Oct at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* (MO).

Black-billed Magpie: Not usually found away from its unique breeding location in *Plymouth*, one was seen 19 Oct from the Hitchcock hawk watch platform *Pottawattamie*, flying south (*MO). Two reports from the Broken Kettle Grasslands in *Plymouth* included one involving 3 birds (JG, GLV).

Purple Martin: The high count was

a dismally low count of 235 on 16 Aug at Jester Park Polk (JB).

Tree Swallow: First peak was 7535 on 1 Aug at Red Rock Res Marion (SJD). After a bitter cold and snowy start to October, peaked again on 9, 10 Oct with up to 10,000 at Saylorville Res Polk (RLC, JB, SJD). The last 9 were still at Red Rock Res Marion on 14 Nov (SJD).

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: Last seen on 9 Oct at Waterworks P Polk (JB).

Bank Swallow: The high count was 850 on 1 Aug at Red Rock Res Marion (SJD), and the last was a group of 30 at Rathbun L Appanoose 23 Aug (RLC).

Cliff Swallow: The high count was 3670 on 1 Aug at Red Rock Res Marion (SJD), and the last was one over Saylorville Res Polk 4 Oct (SJD).

Barn Swallow: 17 were still at Saylorville Res Polk on 24 Oct (JB), but the very last was a week later on 31 Oct at Red Rock Res Marion (SJD).

Black-capped Chickadee: JS noted that in Warren this species appears to have made a recovery from a low point in its population.

Tufted Titmouse: 11 were counted in Decatur on 23 Sep (NJM). One in Bronson Woodbury 17–23 Nov was a bit west of its usual range (TLu, BFH, GLV).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: There were 25 reports from 16 counties involving at least 59 birds. The first was 1 on 19 Aug at Algona Kossuth (MCK). In Nov, as many as 7 at a time were seen in Decatur, and at a private property north of Iowa City Johnson (NJM, JLF).

Brown Creeper: First reported on 2 Sep in Carolyn Fischer's yard in Mason City Cerro Gordo. The most was 6 on 14 Oct in Decatur (NJM).

Carolina Wren: Found in Johnson,

Warren and Polk throughout the season (JLF, JS, JG), and Appanoose, Boone, Decatur, Jasper, Jefferson, Kossuth, Scott, Story, and Woodbury at least part of the season (m.ob).

House Wren: The last was 1 on 25 Oct in Warren (JS).

Winter Wren: Very widely reported from 19 Sep in Guthrie (HZ) to 16 Nov in Warren (JS). The most was 8 on 30 Sep at Smith WA in Kossuth (MCK).

Sedge Wren: Two good spots for this species were Chichaqua WA Polk and Hanolontown M Worth where at least 14 were still present and vocalizing in late Aug and early Sep (BE, JB). The last was 1 on 25 Oct at Diehl Wetlands Warren (JS).

Marsh Wren: At least 30 were found at Buckshot M Appanoose 26 Sep (RLC). The last was 1 at Table M in southern Woodbury on 19 Oct (GLV).

Golden-crowned Kinglet: The first 3 were found at Grammar Grove Marshall 30 Sep (MP). Two pockets of migrants from the nine reports were 20 on 10 Oct in Cerro Gordo (PH) and 35 on 25 Oct in Dickinson (JG). The last 5 were at Pammel Woods Story on 28 Oct (CG).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: First was 1 at Brookside P Story 16 Sep (CG). An extensive mixed flock of tiny migrants at Lime Creek Cerro Gordo 10 Oct contained as many as 100 (PH). The last was 1 in Allamakee on 27 Nov (DK).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: The last was 1 on 3 Oct at Grammar Grove Marshall (JS).

Eastern Bluebird: Compact flocks of 26–35 birds were reported five times between 25 Sep and 27 Oct (JRL, NJM, GLV, MCK) at widely separated locations.

Townsend's Solitaire: The only one was at Lansing Allamakee 26 Nov (JG).

Veery: Last seen in daylight on 28 Aug at Brookside P Story (CG). Last heard overhead 21 Sep at Grimes Polk (JB).



Orange-crowned Warbler, near Boone, Boone, 4 October 2009. Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: The only reports were of nocturnal flight calls 21 Sep in Polk (JB) and 22 Sep in Algona Kossuth (MCK).

Swainson's Thrush: First: 1 on 28 Aug at Brookside P Story (CG). Most actually seen, 10 on 13 Sep at AA Call SP Kossuth (MCK). Heaviest movements: about 5 per minute heard overhead 21, 22 Sep in Polk (JB) and Kossuth (MCK). Last: 2 on 9 Oct at Ada Hayden P Story (WO).

Hermit Thrush: The first was found at Parker's Woods Cerro Gordo 29 Sep (RG). The most was 9 at Sharon Bluffs SP Appanoose 17 Oct (CRE).

Wood Thrush: A family group was still foraging at AA Call SP Kossuth on 2 Sep (MCK). The last two were at Kent P Johnson 11 Sep (DP), and McIntosh Woods SP Cerro Gordo 16 Sep (RG).

American Robin: About 10,000 were estimated migrating through Ahquabi SP Warren 24 Oct (JS).

Gray Catbird: Two lingered late, until 8 Nov, one at Saylorville Res Polk (JS), and another at the home of KDy in Page.

Northern Mockingbird: The only re-

port was 1 on 11 Aug at Red Rock Res Marion (SJD).

Brown Thrasher: The last was 1 at Brown's L Woodbury 10 Oct (TLu).

American Pipit: First found at Oak Grove RA on the shores of Saylorville Res Polk on 30 Aug (BE), which was a bit early, about two weeks earlier than the median arrival date over the last 20 years. Some larger flocks were 86 on 21 Oct in Decatur (NJM), 70 on 24 Oct in Jasper (KVS), and 80 on 1 Nov in Webster (MCK).

Blue-winged Warbler: The only one was at Grammar Grove Marshall on 22 Aug (MP).

Golden-winged Warbler: Appeared suddenly on 22 Aug in three different central Iowa counties (MP, JB, CG). Never plentiful, found in ones and twos until 27 Sep in Story (CG).

Tennessee Warbler: The first report was 1 at Waterworks P Polk on 17 Aug (JB), and was followed by many others. The last was 2nd-latest on 30 Oct at Lindsay P Scott (*WMZ).

Orange-crowned Warbler: The first 8 appeared on the same day, 23 Sep, in three different counties. At Boyson Park Linn there were 3 (BSc), 4 were in Decatur (NJM) and 1 was at Union Sl NWR Kossuth (MCK). As many as 68 were counted in Decatur on 14 Oct (NJM). The last was 1 on 7 Nov at Ankeny Polk (RLC).

Nashville Warbler: The earliest migrants arrived in late July (Dinsmore 2009a). NJM had a huge fallout in Decatur on 26 Sep and counted 159. The last was 3rd-latest on 7 Nov near Iowa Falls Hardin (TSS).

Northern Parula: The last few were 5

on 27 Sep at Red Rock Res Marion (JG), and then 1 on 29 Sep at Waterworks P Polk (JB).

Yellow Warbler: The last two were on 26 Sep in *Greene* and 27 Sep in *Marion* (CG, JG).

Chestnut-sided Warbler: With several present during June and July (Dinsmore 2009a), the status of the first few found in fall is unclear. But since 22 days of Aug passed before 6 suddenly showed up in three different counties, *Cerro Gordo*, *Marshall* and *Story*, it seems likely they were the first migrants. After that, reports were common consisting of groups of 1–8 in ten east and central counties. The last two were on 3 Oct in *Polk* and 4 Oct in *Tama* (BE, BT).

Magnolia Warbler: The first was 1 on 26 Aug at Grammar Grove *Marshall* (MP). The last, on 20 Oct in Ames, was quite late, 20 days later than the next-to-last report (CG).

Cape May Warbler: There were five single birds found: 1 on 31 Aug in *Polk* (JB), 1 on 3 Sep at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JG), 1 on 7 Sep at Cedar Valley P *Cedar* (SJD), 1 on 17 Sep at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS), and the last on 26 Sep at the unusual location of Lock & Dam 14 in *Scott* (SJD).

Black-throated Blue Warbler: Nine birds were found this fall, *all females*, during the two-week period 11–26 Sep: 1 at Kent P *Johnson* (DP), 1 at Squaw Creek P *Linn* (JF), 1 at Grammar Grove *Marshall* (MP), 2 at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* (RG), 1 at Boyson P *Linn* (BSc), 1 at Lock & Dam 14 *Scott* (SJD), 1 at Muskrat Sl *Jones* (SJD), and the last at Walnut Woods SP *Polk* (JG).

Yellow-rumped Warbler: The first, on 30 Aug in *Johnson* (JPB), was about a week ahead of the median arrival date over the last 15 years (6 Sep). Some concentrations were 100 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 11 Oct (RLC), and 89 in *Decatur* on 1 Oct (NJM).

Black-throated Green Warbler: Very widely reported from all regions except the southwest. The first few were 2 on 27 Aug in *Clay* (LAS), and 1 in Seminole Valley P *Linn* on 30 Aug (BT). Up to 12 were found at Red Rock Res *Marion* 27 Sep (JG). The last was 1 on 3 Oct in *Marshall* (DJN).

Blackburnian Warbler: The first was 1 on 22 Aug at Grammar Grove *Marshall* (MP). As many as 7 were at Smith WA *Kossuth* on 15 Sep (MCK). The last were 2 in *Decatur* and another at Lock & Dam 14 *Scott* on 26 Sep (NJM, SJD).

Yellow-throated Warbler: The last was 1 at Walnut Woods SP *Polk* 13 Sep (JS).

Pine Warbler: One on 9 Oct in *Decatur* (NJM) was 3rd-latest in the fall.

Palm Warbler: The first, on 7 Sep at Cedar Rapids *Linn* (BSc), was a week earlier than the median arrival date over the last 23 years (14 Sep). Also reported from Appanoose, *Black Hawk*, *Cherokee*, *Decatur*, *Greene*, *Linn*, *Polk*, *Poweshiek*, *Story* and *Winneshiek*. The last two were found 27 Oct in *Decatur* and *Poweshiek* (JRL, SJD).

Bay-breasted Warbler: The first was found 26 Aug at Liscomb *Marshall* by MP who remarked it was his only one in the fall. On the other hand MCK found it on four different dates including 3 on 30 Aug at AA Call SP *Kossuth*, which was the most. The last two were found 26 Sep in *Polk* and *Decatur* (JB, NJM).

Blackpoll Warbler: Rare in fall, this species was reported once on 2 Oct at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

Black-and-white Warbler: Although there were two July reports from southern Iowa (Dinsmore 2009a), the beginning of the fall migration probably was marked by the five birds seen 21, 22 Aug in *Fayette*, *Marshall*, *Polk* and *Story* (JB, MP, CG, BT). High counts of 15, 11 and 12 occurred in the second half of Sep (MCK, NJM, JG). The

last was 4th-latest on 26 Oct at Cedar Rapids Linn (BSc).

American Redstart: The last 2 were on 27 Sep at Emma McCarthy Lee P Story (CG).

Prothonotary Warbler: The only report was 1 male photographed along the Iowa R corridor Iowa 7 Sep (SJD).

Ovenbird: Steady reports ended with 1 on 27 Sep in *Story* (CG). Then, nearly a month later, a straggler was found near Fairfield *Jefferson* on the 3rd-latest date of 19 Oct (DCP-photo). Another month passed, and a final punctuation mark struck a window in *Boone* on the 2nd-latest date of 11 Nov (J.&J. Bahrenfus *sive* SJD).

Northern Waterthrush: The first, on 5 Aug at Eagle L *Hancock* (RG), tied the date for record-earliest, but might not have been a migrant. One was seen at the same location on 15 Jun (Dinsmore 2009a). The next sighting occurred 21 Aug at Waterworks P *Polk* (JB). The last three were found on 26 Sep in *Marshall* and *Cerro Gordo* (MP, RG).

Kentucky Warbler: The only report was 1 on 21 Aug near Fairfield *Jefferson* (DCP).

Connecticut Warbler: There were two reports of this rare migrant, one with brief, incomplete details, and another with no details. There is a strong eastern component to the initial vector of the Connecticut Warbler's fall migration, and as a result, Iowa does not lie in their path.

Mourning Warbler: The first was 1 on 23 Aug at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). All 13 reports were from east and central Iowa. The last, on 3 Oct at Nicholson Ford *Marshall* (MP), was 3rd latest.

Common Yellowthroat: The last was 1 on 25 Oct at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JB).

Wilson's Warbler: The first was in Cedar Rapids *Linn* on 12 Aug (BSc). Reports came from all parts of the state except the

far west. The last four were found 26 Sep in *Story*, *Decatur* and *Linn* (WO, NJM, BT).

Canada Warbler: Suddenly appeared on 22 Aug in *Scott*, *Marshall* and two locations in *Story* (WMZ, WO, MP, CG). There were 19 reports, with the most 6 on 30 Aug at AA Call SP *Kossuth* (MCK), and the last 1 on 20 Sep at Emma McCarthy Lee P *Story* (CG).

Yellow-breasted Chat: One at Red Rock Res *Marion* on 11 Aug was the only report (SJD).

Spotted Towhee: All: 1 on 4 Oct at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), 1 on 23 Oct in Ames *Story* (CG), and 1 on 31 Oct at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JB).

Eastern Towhee: The last was 1 on 1 Nov in *Decatur* (NJM).

American Tree Sparrow: One at the Waterman Prairie *O'Brien* 11 Oct was the first (SJD).

Chipping Sparrow: Most: 49 on 15 Oct in *Decatur* (NJM). Last: 1 on 14 Nov in Indianola *Warren* (JS).

Clay-colored Sparrow: All: 1 on 27 Aug in *Clay* (LAS) was prior to the usual migration window, 4 in *Decatur* 24–26 Sep (NJM), and 2 on 28 Sep *Cerro Gordo* (RG).

Field Sparrow: As many as 38 were counted in *Decatur* 29 Sep–1 Oct (NJM, JRL), where the last also occurred 14 Nov.

Vesper Sparrow: As many as 40 were counted 29 Aug along a stretch of rural road in *Winnebago* (JB). The last was on 1 Nov in *Decatur* (NJM).

Lark Sparrow: The only report of this early-departing species involved 2 at Jester Park *Polk* 2 Aug (JB).

Savannah Sparrow: Most: 63 on 15 Oct in *Decatur* (NJM). Last: 2 on 18 Nov at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

Grasshopper Sparrow: The only fall report was from Errington M *Polk* where up to 4 were present 17–20 Sep (CG).



Savannah Sparrow, near Bjorkboda Marsh, Boone, 11 September 2009. Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.

Henslow's Sparrow: Reported from Greene, Jasper, Jefferson, Marion, Polk, and also Boone where the last was at Harrier M on 4 Oct (SJD, JG).

Le Conte's Sparrow: The first were 5 on 26 Sep at Snake Creek M Greene (CG). There were many good places to find this species this fall, including 8–15 at Harrier M Boone, Buckshot M and Sedan Appanoose, Errington M Polk, and Riverton WA Fremont (JG, RLC, TJ, SJD, BE, KDy). The last was 1 on 8 Nov at Saylorville Res Polk (JS).

Nelson's Sparrow: First appeared in the south when 5 were found at Sedan Appanoose on 18 Sep (TJ). Reported from 12 wetlands spanning the state. The most was 14 on 23 Sep at Union Sl NWR Kossuth (MCK), and the last was getting late on 24 Oct at Fuller-Green Valley Keokuk (CRE).

Fox Sparrow: For the fourth consecutive year, the first arrivals were found on the same date, 30 Sep, with 2 at Smith WA Kossuth (MCK). The most was 19 on 16 Oct in Decatur (NJM).

Lincoln's Sparrow: The first was 2nd-earliest on 27 Aug in Clay (LAS). The next arrival was two weeks later on 11 Sep

at Burr Oak Winneshiek (Lee Zieke fide DC) and was followed by steady reports through 24 Oct when the last 2 were found in Decatur (NJM).

Swamp Sparrow: Some high counts were 24 on 3 Oct and 30 on 9 Oct both in Appanoose, and 22 on 11 Oct in O'Brien (RLC, DT, SJD).

White-throated Sparrow: The first, on 16 Sep at McIntosh SP in Cerro Gordo (RG) was 4 days later than the 20-

year median arrival date of 12 Sep. In mid-Oct, as many as 50 were counted at Saylorville Res Polk (RLC), and 98 in Decatur (NJM).

Harris's Sparrow: The first few, a group of 5 on 29 Sep in Algona Kossuth (MCK), were 5 days later than the 20-year median arrival date of 24 Sep. The most was 41 at Waterman Prairie O'Brien 11 Oct (SJD). Last was 1 on 1 Nov in Decatur (NJM).

White-crowned Sparrow: The first, 1 on 29 Sep near Fairfield Jefferson (DCP), was a day later than the 20-year median arrival date. There were only 8 reports of 1–4 birds, with the last 1 on 30 Oct in Ames Story (CG).

Dark-eyed Junco: The first few, 1 at Algona Kossuth and 4 in Ames Story on 29 Sep (MCK, CG), were 10 days later than the median-arrival date over the last 20 years.

Lapland Longspur: Two on 30 Sep at Wildin Prairie Kossuth (MCK) matched the date for 2nd-earliest. The first large flock was about 700 on 25 Oct at a small WPA in Kossuth (MCK, JG) and which grew to around 1500 by 31 Oct (CG). Another



Western Grebe, Red Rock Reservoir, Marion,
15 November 2009. Photograph by Cory J.
Gregory, Ames, IA.

Great Egret, Bjorkboda Marsh, Hamilton, 11
September 2009. Photograph by Jim Moreland,
Boone, IA.



Juvenile Northern Goshawk captured
during banding efforts, Hitchcock Nature
Center, Pottawattamie, 1 November 2009.
Photo by Carla Alschwede, Lincoln, NE.



Red-tailed Hawk (adult western
rufous morph), rural Dallas, 8
November 2009. Photograph by Jay
Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.

Virginia Rail, near Bjorkboda Marsh,
Boone, 11 September 2009. Photograph by
Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.



Sora, near Bjorkboda Marsh, Boone,
11 September 2009. Photograph by
Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.

Spotted Sandpiper, Saylorville Reservoir,
Polk, 24 October 2009. Photograph by
Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.



American Golden-Plover,
Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, 19
September 2009. Photograph
by John Bissell, Grimes, IA.



*Solitary Sandpiper with leech,
Bjorkboda Marsh, Hamilton, 15
August 2009. Photograph by Jim
Moreland, Boone, IA.*

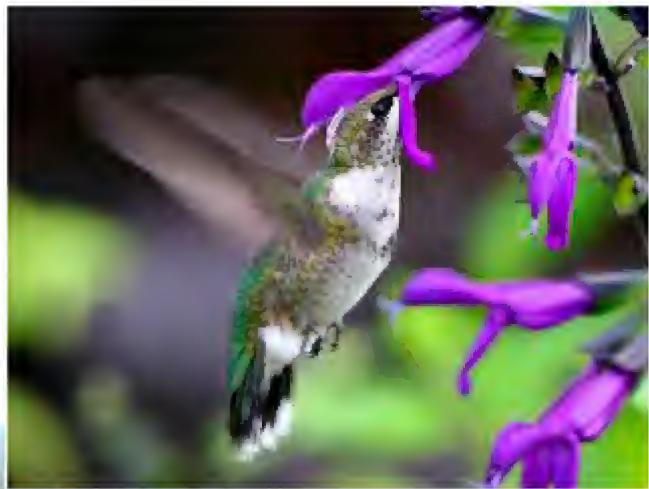


*Franklin's Gull, Saylorville
Reservoir, Polk, 24 October
2009. Photograph by Stephen
J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Monk Parakeet, Iowa City,
Johnson, 3 November 2009.
This species is not yet estab-
lished in Iowa, but several
recent reports, including this
bird, suggest it may do so in
the future. Photograph by
James Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*

Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Reiman Gardens in Ames, Story, 25 September 2009. Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.



Marsh Wren, Errington Marsh, Polk, 20 September 2009. Photograph by Cory J. Gregory, Ames, IA.



Le Conte's Sparrow, Neal Smith NWR, Jasper, 19 October 2009. Photograph by Kayleen A. Niyo, Golden, CO.



Northern Parula, Red Rock Reservoir, Marion, 27 September 2009. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.

1500 were estimated at Neal Smith NWR Jasper on 9 Nov (KVS).

Smith's Longspur: Found in seven counties spanning the period 17 Oct–Nov 2. The first was a lone bird at Sedan Appanoose (JG, JB), followed by groups of 23–72 found at three different short grass WPAs in Kossuth 21–25 Oct (MCK, CG, JG, RG). The most was 104 at Luton WMA Woodbury 25, 26 Oct (TLu, BFH). Also found in Jasper, Polk, Page and Decatur (KVS, AB, SJD, KDy, NJM).

CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR: A pair was found 24 Oct in Kossuth during searches for Smith's Longspur (*CG).

Snow Bunting: The first 10 were noticed 7 Nov at Harpers Ferry Allamakee (DC), the latest arrival date since 1995.

Summer Tanager: The last was a female at Walnut Woods SP Polk 21 Sep (JG).

Scarlet Tanager: The last was a juv male in Decatur on 24 Sep (NJM).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: The last was 1 in the city of Cherokee Cherokee on 29 Oct (DB). RLC counted 22 at Sedan Appanoose 12 Sep.

Blue Grosbeak: Three in Woodbury 23, 24 Sep were 2nd-latest (TLu, GLV).

Indigo Bunting: The last few were seen on 7 Oct in Decatur and Linn (NJM, BSc).

Dickcissel: The last two were seen 19 Oct but were separated by the entire state of Iowa: one was at Horseshoe Bend Louisa along the Mississippi R (CF), and the other was at Table M Woodbury 14 miles from the Missouri R (GLV).

Bobolink: Flocks dressed for fall arose in mid-Aug. Some high counts were 89 on 14 Aug



Scarlet Tanager, Red Rock Reservoir, Marion, 27 September 2009. Photograph by Jay Gilham, Norwalk, IA.

at Red Rock Res Marion (SJD), and two flocks totaling about 100 on 7 Sep in Kossuth (MCK). The last 2 were at Harrier M Boone 4 Oct (CG).

Eastern Meadowlark: One was heard



Rusty Blackbird, Bjorkboda Marsh, Hamilton, 27 October 2009. Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.

calling in *Decatur* on the late date of 28 Nov (NJM).

Yellow-headed Blackbird: No reports.

Rusty Blackbird: The first 2 were at Saylorville Res *Polk* on 10, 11 Oct (RLC, CG), a week later than the 20-year median arrival date of 3 Oct. The largest concentration, by far, was part of a mixed blackbird flock in *Fremont* on 16 Nov estimated to contain 700 Rusties (KDy).

Brewer's Blackbird: The first 8 were at Colo Ponds *Story* 3 Nov (MP), about 2 weeks later than the median arrival date over the last 20-years. A pure flock of about 40 was found clustered along a power line near Eagle Lake in *Hancock* on 17 Nov (RG).

Great-tailed Grackle: The first flocking behavior was observed when 19 were seen 24 Oct in rural *Harrison*, mostly males (JJD).

COMMENT

This article is based on information contributed by 69 field observers whose initials appear in the text with names listed below, plus another 10 whose full names appear in the text. They submitted a total of 2510 reports, including many details, photos and documentations, for which I am very grateful. This is a smaller total than in recent years, but it was a quiet fall with few rarities. These reports came from 77 of Iowa's 99 counties, although 70% of them were from ten heavily-birded counties: Polk, Linn, Decatur, Story, Marion, Appanoose, Kossuth, Marshall, Cerro Gordo, and Woodbury (listed in order of greatest frequency).

Summarized here is the presence of 272 species found in Iowa from 1 August to 30 November 2009. There were 18 common, year-round residents for which at least some data were submitted, but which are not included here. These species are Mallard, Ring-necked Pheasant, Wild Turkey, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, American Crow, White-breasted Nuthatch, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, and Brown-headed Cowbird.

CONTRIBUTORS

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----|-----------|-----------------|-----|-------------|
| Dick Bierman | DB | Cherokee | Aaron Brees | AB | Saylorville |
| John Bissell | JB | Grimes | Mark Brown | MHB | Iowa City |
| John Bollenbacher | JPB | Iowa City | Wayne Buchholtz | WB | Dubuque |

Orchard Oriole: The only report was 1 on 17 Aug at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

Baltimore Oriole: The last was 1 on 25 Sep in *Decatur* (NJM).

Purple Finch: The first two were found 16, 17 Sep in *Decatur* and *Story* (NJM, CG). By 28 Nov, as many as 50 were at Ahquabi SP *Warren* (JS).

Red Crossbill: No reports.

White-winged Crossbill: No reports.

Pine Siskin: Following isolated summer reports (Dinsmore 2009a), this species continued to be found across the state in ones and twos in each of the four months of fall. In fact, the most was a mere 3 at my feeders in Mason City *Cerro Gordo* 17 Nov.

American Goldfinch: Two young were still in the nest on 13 Sep in *Decatur* (NJM).

Eurasian Tree Sparrow: There were two reports from familiar locations in *Lee* and *Scott*.

CONTRIBUTORS, continued

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----|------------------|----------------------|-----|---------------|
| Dennis Carter | DC | Decorah | Jacob Newton | JN | Ottosen |
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| Nathan Miller | NJM | Davis City | | | |

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Hitchcock Nature Center Hawk Watch and Banding, Fall 2009

Mark Orsag

SEASON IN SUMMARY—THE YEAR THAT BROKE THE MOLD

After a terribly slow start to the 2009 season in August and September, the fall hawk flight resurrected itself with the 2nd strongest October on record at Hitchcock Nature Center (HNC) hawk watch, followed by the 3rd strongest November and the 2nd strongest December. The overall season total of 10,638 birds (of seventeen different species) logged is just 5% below average. For most of the season, we expected much, much worse. The massive (1,340) late flight of 23 October saved the season and broke the Hitchcock mode of the fall flight annually peaking between 20 September and 20 October. Overall, 13 species posted below average totals and seven above average totals. Season records were set for Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, and Merlin. New day marks were set for Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, and Merlin.

Other trends apparent in 2009 did, however, carry-over from past seasons. Western species tended to, as they have the past several seasons, trend downward. Accipiters showed strongly again in 2009, while Merlin numbers continued to explode. American Kestrel numbers continued strongly to reflect a national pattern of decline. The banding station, under Jerry Toll's able guidance, enjoyed a banner year for both diurnal raptors and Saw-whet Owls. Hitchcock Nature Center indeed logged a record six owl species (Barred, Eastern Screech, Great-horned, Long-eared, Saw-whet, and Short-eared) during the hawk watch!

THE SEASON IN DETAIL

August and September

August started the season out in a somewhat odd manner (a sign of things to come in 2009). Seven days of part-time counting brought only a paltry 94 raptors (with 54 of the birds counted being immature Turkey Vultures). A total of eleven species were recorded, however, making August 2009 a surprisingly diverse month. Continual weak cold fronts probably led to fairly broad-front early movement (thus the low overall numbers) but did trigger a few unusually early departures (such as the Merlin seen on 20 August). The lack of south winds also probably kept young Turkey Vultures from staging and tacking their way south using the Loess Hills.

Full-time counting began as usual on September 1, and HNC hawk watch counter Ryan Evans, along with his faithful canine, Dog, reported for duty. A relentless pattern of southeasterly and easterly winds set in with the new month and dominated its first ten days. These are not favorable wind directions at Hitchcock as they create only weak up-drafts as the steep face of the Loess Hills is on its west side. Thus, Turkey Vulture movement was particularly slow and not much else was flying either. Ryan and Mark Orsag (along

with his Welsh Terrier, Griffin) experienced a decent raptor and nonraptor push on 6 September with a flight of 521 Red-headed Woodpeckers being the day's highlight. A total of 53 young Turkey Vultures dominated the raptor flight of 66 birds with an early Swainson's Hawk as the highlight.

The pattern of easterlies and south-easterlies continued through the middle part of the month with only a couple of weak cold fronts and low pressure systems moving through and pushing the winds out of the northeast. The flight remained excruciatingly slow and many hawk watchers began to sense a bad season ahead. Perhaps the most notable day of this period occurred on 16 September when Ryan took the tower with only Dog for company. A weak cold front with northeast winds produced an 85 raptor flight that included ten species. Red-tailed (21) and Broad-winged (22) hawks dominated with three Merlin being the day's highlights. During the last ten days of September that traditionally begin the "prime time" period at Hitchcock, the weather pattern finally broke a bit and the raptors began to flow past the tower. However, the volume was low compared to how this period usually plays out, and there were several very poor days. Triple digit flights occurred on 25 (144) and 29 (113) September; totals exceeding 200 southbound raptors were posted on 23 (237), 26 (274), and 28 (280) September. The outstanding day of the month occurred on 27 September; Ryan Evans, Mark Orsag, and Jim Sinclair counted a whopping 417 raptors of 11 species. A moderately strong Pacific cold front passed Hitchcock around 11 A.M. with the day's most intense movement taking place just before the frontal boundary passed through. Broad-winged Hawks (191) and Turkey Vultures (114) were the dominant species on the day. Still, despite a few good days at the end of the month, September 2009 had been, by far, the worst September ever at HNC hawk watch with fewer than 2,500 migrant raptors recorded.

October

Despite the lack, for the third year in a row, of a strong push of Swainson's Hawks, the flight began to gather momentum in early October and only one day out of the first ten days of the month failed to see a triple-digit flight. Turkey Vultures had finally begun to move in numbers and were joined by an early push of Red-tailed Hawks. A strong two-day push of more than 900 birds on 7 and 8 October proved to be the highlight of early October. On 7 October, Ryan Evans and Jason McMeen counted an updraft-powered (strong southwest winds) 12 species, 307 bird flight that was dominated by Turkey Vultures (244). The winds turned to the north the next day for Ryan and Clem Klaphake, temperatures dropped, and a mass of Turkey Vultures (332) and Red-tailed Hawks (176) pushed though accompanied by eight other raptor species including a lone Golden Eagle. The daily total was 604 birds.

A baffling and shifting weather pattern (including an early snow storm) during the middle of October brought mostly disappointing totals. Most flights were only double-digit affairs and the only two days over 200 birds occurred on 19 and 20 October at the very end of the traditional "prime time" period. Mark Orsag and Ryan Evans logged a ten species 259 bird flight on southerly winds on 19 October that was dominated by Sharp-shinned (115) and Red-tailed (87) hawks. The day also featured two outstanding birds—a Red-shouldered Hawk and a Black-billed Magpie. On 20 October (a cloudy day with light

southeast winds that initially looked none too promising), Ryan, Fritz Davis, and Linda Dennis took the tower and were surprised with a HNC hawk watch day-record flight of Sharp-shinned Hawks (237) in a flight of 288 raptors that also included four Merlins. "Prime-time" was now over, and while there appeared to be a strong late Sharp-shinned Hawk push, the main topic of discussion amongst HNC hawk watchers was trying to estimate just how awful our season totals were going to be with some believing that we might not even record 8,500 raptors for the season.

The next two days included a rain-out and a paltry 36 bird day. Then came "the day that saved the season." On 23 October, Ryan Evans, Jason McMeen, Elliott Bedows, and Fritz Davis logged time on the tower. Northwest winds were blowing after the passage of a strong "Alberta Clipper" cold front. The morning saw rain, although this didn't deter the Northern Harriers and Sharp-shinned Hawks. Right away, the experienced watchers on the tower had a clue that something extraordinary might be about to happen. The rain stopped at 10 A.M. and later in the day the sun broke through. The birds, riding high on the strong updrafts, soared in massive mixed groups and shot high over the tower in dizzying fast glides. American Crows poured by in twisting snake-like flocks. The migrants kept coming in waves with the counters straining to keep up. In the end 1,340 raptors of eleven species were counted along with 8,695 American Crows, one Great Blue Heron, 17 Double-crested Cormorants, and 50 Snow Geese. New day records had been set for Northern Harrier (138), Red-tailed Hawk (933), and Merlin (19); four Northern Goshawks had also been recorded. The flight had been extraordinary also in how late it had been; for the first time ever at HNC hawk watch, the fall raptor flight had peaked outside of the 20 September—20 October window. The final week of October saw three more strong days—on 25 October (379), 26 October (194), and 31 October (236). Red-tailed Hawks dominated all of these flights. The strong flight on Halloween continued an amazing tradition (stretching back as far as anyone can remember) of good luck on that day at HNC.

November and December

November started out with fairly moderate temperatures. By the middle of the month, however, the weather had cooled considerably as a series of cold fronts moved through in rapid-fire fashion. On the nonfront days, winds tended to be out of the southeast. As this pattern gave migrant raptors little chance to stage in the hills and probably pushed them through on a fairly broad front, most flights in the first half of November were quite modest. Notable flights did occur, however, on 1, 2, and 9 November. With a visiting group from Wachiska Audubon helping Mark Orsag and Sandy Reinken on the tower on 1 November, a nine species-159 bird flight took place. The day was dominated by Red-tailed Hawks (97), but featured a late Turkey Vulture, two Rough-legged Hawks, a Red-shouldered Hawk, and an immature Northern Goshawk trapped at the banding station by Carla Alschwede and Jerry Toll. A moderately strong cold front pushed through the next day bringing another nine species flight. The flight on 2 November was larger, however, with a total of 311 raptors (Red-tailed Hawks totaled 273) for Ryan Evans and Jason McMeen. Two Northern Goshawks were the highlights that day. On 9 November, with Ryan on the tower alone, a Pacific cold front brought a nine species 120 raptor flight dominated by Red-tailed Hawks (79) and Bald Eagles (25). Highlights included three Rough-legged

Hawks, two Golden Eagles, and a lone Northern Goshawk (if there had been a partridge in a pear tree, it surely would have been eaten!).

The second half of November was cloudy and cold, and whether the winds blew from the north or southeast seemed to matter little. There were few really strong fronts or good thermalling days, and the late-season raptors still north of the watch in late November are apparently a hardy lot, willing to endure the deepening cold and wait for the perfect day. On 16 November there was a six species 113 raptor flight dominated by Red-tailed Hawks (75) and Bald Eagles (34) for counter Ryan Evans. A somewhat stronger cold front blew through on 25 November sparking a seven species 143 raptor flight and a strong push of non-raptor migrants for counters Ryan Evans, Jerry Toll (whose duties leading the banding project had concluded for 2009) and Jason McMeen. Red-tailed Hawks (75) and Bald Eagles (59) dominated, but the flight also included a Golden Eagle and a Red-shouldered Hawk. Snow Geese (3,450) were accompanied by Ross's Geese (36), Ring-billed Gulls (59), and American Crows (95).

The slow pattern of late November carried on into December as the season ground to a close. Two similarly powerful Arctic fronts just five days apart did their part to freeze hawk watchers and bring lots of birds for the two last times in 2009. On 9 December, Jerry Toll and Ryan Evans endured a combination of -15.8 Celsius temperatures and howling northwest winds to count a five species 143 raptor flight that included 123 Bald Eagles, 4 Rough-legged Hawks, and one Golden Eagle. On 14 December, a four species 136 raptor flight was noted by Ryan with 129 Bald Eagles accompanied by one Rough-legged Hawk.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Black Vulture (0). This species, which turned up at the HNC hawk watch in September of 2002 and August of 2005, again failed to make an appearance in 2009. The Black Vulture seems to be a very irregular early season vagrant at the hawk watch.

Turkey Vulture (2,668). Steady easterly winds early in the season might have pushed many of these birds into Nebraska. Turkey Vultures love to tack and use updrafts as they drift lazily south. Conditions at HNC hawk watch (with the near absence of westerly and particularly southwesterly winds early in the season) were thus far from ideal for a big flight for this species in 2009. The 2009 season total was 13% below the HNC hawk watch average; interestingly, the 2008 total had been 13% above average. The 2009 peak flight of 332 occurred with normal timing on 8 October. The last bird was seen on 12 November.

Osprey (100). Another early-season updraft and south-wind favoring "tacker," the Osprey, like the Turkey Vulture, showed up in below average numbers at the HNC hawk watch in 2009. The 2009 season total of 100 Ospreys was 14% below the HNC hawk watch average (the 2008 total had been 12% above average). Flight timing was in all ways normal. As usual, the HNC hawk watch Osprey flight was strongly concentrated in September, with the peak flight of 22 taking place on 25 September (one of the few early season days featuring southwesterly winds). The first two Ospreys were recorded on 20 August with the last being recorded on 19 October.

Bald Eagle (854). The Bald Eagle flight for 2009 was 5% above average for the HNC hawk watch. December was the top month and that month saw two very big Bald Eagle flights—123 birds on 9 December and a season-high 129 individuals

on 14 December. Both of those flights occurred on frigid days, following the passage of strong cold fronts overnight, with blustery northwest winds the following day. As has become usual in recent years, a few eagles moved at the front end of the season with the first southbound bird (an adult) recorded on 20 August. Despite this year's rebound, the Bald Eagle has posted a fairly clear pattern of decline at the HNC hawk watch. We believe, however, that this almost certainly reflects a flight path shift (possibly related to shifting Snow Goose migration patterns) rather than a decline or other change in Bald Eagle populations distributed north of HNC.

Northern Harrier (384). This species posted very big numbers at the HNC hawk watch in 2009 after two very poor seasons. The 2009 total of 384 Northern Harriers was a new HNC hawk watch season record and fully 25% above average (interestingly, once again 2008's flight had been 25% below average). Flight timing was normal with October being the top month. The peak flight of 138 on 23 October was a new day record and obliterated the old (thrice-reached) mark of 49. The first two southbound harriers were counted on 28 August. The last harrier was recorded on 20 December (the last day of the 2009 hawk watch). This species seems to post widely fluctuating totals from season to season. There seems, however, to be no easily discernible pattern to, or explanation for, these variations. Perhaps due to their extreme adaptability in terms of migratory conditions (wind, weather, sunlight) harrier migration behavior at HNC hawk watch is still not well understood.

Sharp-shinned Hawk (1,273). All of the accipiters posted very strong totals in 2009 and Sharp-shinned Hawks moved through in abundance this season, setting

new seasonal and day records and posting three triple digit days. Flight timing was a bit late and October (966) was overwhelmingly the top month for sharp-shinneds after a very slow start to the flight in September. This was a more extreme version of a pattern we've seen previously at Hitchcock. The new day record of 237 was set on 20 October, a cloudy day with light to moderate southeast winds. The first Sharpshinned Hawk was spotted on 29 August, and the 2009 seasonal total was a whopping 22% above average.

Cooper's Hawk (277). This total was yet another season record, although the season daily high count of 31 birds on 23 October did not constitute a new day record for the HNC hawk watch. The season total was a solid 19% above average, and the Cooper's Hawk has shown a clear positive trend at the HNC hawk watch that probably indicates population increases and possible range expansion to the north of HNC. The last southbound bird moved through on 28 November, but at least one Cooper's Hawk appeared to be wintering at the nature center.

Northern Goshawk (11). The roughly decade-long migratory cycle of the Northern Goshawk is relatively well-understood, even by hawk watchers without advanced degrees in raptor biology. Thus, we have been anticipating a major goshawk uptick to come between 2009 and 2011. While this year certainly seemed to fill the bill, it still didn't match the remarkable day (6) and season (18) records dating from the last peak year at the HNC hawk watch, the partial coverage 2000 season. In 2009, the first goshawk was recorded on 16 October and the last on 6 December. The 2009 daily season high of 4 came on 23 October. The season total was 57% above the seven-year full-coverage HNC hawk watch average.

Red-shouldered Hawk (3). The 2009 season total, which matched the 2008 season total, was 40% below average. The Red-shouldered Hawk has demonstrated a clear pattern of decline at the HNC hawk watch, but this species is simply too rare to venture any solid conclusions about its population or range distribution status. The first bird was seen on 19 October and the last on 25 October; there were no multiple bird days. Flight timing has varied a bit over the years, but nothing about this season's flight seemed out of the ordinary.

Broad-winged Hawk (495). The Broad-winged Hawk 2009 season total of 495 birds was 24% below average. This apparently reflected both the overall poor nature of the early season flight and, apparently, a dearth of migrants from western Canada. For the first time ever at the HNC hawk watch, we recorded no dark morph broad-wingeds. These birds were surely pushed west of us by the relentless easterly winds early in the season. Despite these trends, flight timing wasn't terribly abnormal. The first bird was recorded on 22 August; the last sailed past on 7 October. The peak flight of 191 on 27 September was, however, just a bit late. September (479) was, as always, the top month.

Swainson's Hawk (248). Once again, as has been the case now for three straight seasons, there was a very feeble flight of Swainson's Hawks past the HNC hawk watch in 2009. Flight timing, however, was normal with the first bird seen on 6 September. The last Swainson's Hawk was recorded on 14 October and the peak flight of 53 occurred just a bit early on 28 September (though within their traditional ten-day window). One rufous morph and one dark morph Swainson's Hawks were recorded. The season total of 248 was 80% below the HNC hawk watch average. The

times when Swainson's Hawks annually posted 1,000 bird days at the HNC hawk watch in late September or early October seem long gone now. This species shows a sharp and demonstrable pattern of decline at HNC. There are many possible explanations: population decline due to drought in the western United States and Canada, easterly winds (certainly prevalent in 2009) pushing migrants into Nebraska, or maybe we are just geographically on the margin of their possible flight path and big flights of this species at the HNC hawk watch will always be cyclic or hit and miss. Only time will tell, but we really miss these graceful birds.

Red-tailed Hawk (4,039). The Red-tailed Hawk flight in fall 2009 at the HNC hawk watch was a memorable one. The season total was fully 17% above average, and a new day record for Red-tailed Hawks (933) was set on 23 October. This remains one of our most abundant and reliable species. Population trends appear stable for the seven years of data that we have collected. As always, the red-taileds passing over HNC were a very diverse lot and included both of the main Western and Eastern subspecies and a wide variety of other more geographically specific subspecies and color morphs: Harlan's dark morph (37), Harlan's light morph (4), Western dark morph (32), Western rufous morph (3), Krider's (12), and indeterminate dark morph (24).

Rough-legged Hawk (31). The 2009 rough-legged flight at the HNC hawk watch logged in a bit late and a bit on the small side. The season total was 6% below the HNC hawk watch average. The first two rough-leggeds were not recorded until 1 November (about a week late) and December (17) was the peak month. The twin peak flights (4) occurred on 6 and 9 December. The relatively high percentage

(26%) of dark morphs (8) in the 2009 flight suggests a more eastern flavor to the rough-leggeds passing HNC hawk watch in 2009 than is usually the case. A cyclic pattern to rough-legged migration at the HNC hawk watch appears to be beginning to emerge from our data, but it is still too uncertain. Hopefully, the next several years of data will bring more clarity to the situation.

Ferruginous Hawk (0). Going into 2008, we'd had a remarkable run of 1- and 2-bird seasons with these magnificent buteos at the HNC hawk watch, but they are casual or accidental rarities in Iowa, and even at the location in the state annually most likely to produce a sighting, our luck had to run out eventually. During the last two seasons, this much anticipated rarity has failed to make an appearance. Like a number of other western species, it shows a pattern of decline at the HNC hawk watch, though our numbers are too small to draw any real conclusions about the population health and distribution of this species.

Golden Eagle (17). The Golden Eagle has established a clear, but still somewhat mystifying, migratory pattern at the HNC hawk watch. The first bird appears either in late September or early October. November is usually the peak month. The last bird passes by in early or mid-December. The flight is widely spaced without major peaks (day counts rarely top two birds). The season totals also (with two exceptions) don't tend to vary wildly from year to year. The 2009 Golden Eagle flight fit this pattern exactly in every way but one. November (7) was the peak month. The flight produced no single peak but rather three 2-bird days spread out between October and November. The last bird passed by on 15 December. The season total was only 6% below the HNC hawk watch average. The one difference this season was

a record early (for the HNC hawk watch) Golden Eagle on 12 September, about two to three weeks early.

American Kestrel (92). The decline of the American Kestrel has become particularly apparent at the HNC hawk watch over the last two seasons. While the 2009 total rebounded ever so slightly from the rock bottom reached in 2008, the 2009 season total was still a whopping 22% below the seven-year full coverage HNC hawk watch average (and that average excludes the partial coverage years prior to 2003 which often saw much higher kestrel totals despite only part-time coverage). The 2009 flight was late and weak. The flight peaked with 13 birds on 28 September, but October was the peak month.

Merlin (87). In 2009, the ongoing explosion of Merlin numbers at the HNC hawk watch found yet another level. New season and day (19 Merlins on 23 October) records were established. The Merlin flight at the HNC hawk watch now regularly spans the season. The first Merlin was counted on 20 August, and the last southbound bird logged on 18 December. October, as usual, was the top month. As usual, both *columbarius* and *richardsonii* individuals were recorded in 2009. The 2009 season total for Merlins was an amazing 112% above average. If current trends continue, the Merlin will soon be the common (default) small falcon at Hitchcock and the American Kestrel the uncommon small falcon.

Peregrine Falcon (35). After three strong seasons, Peregrine Falcons were much less in evidence at the HNC hawk watch this year with the 2009 season total logging in 10% below average. October was, as usual, the top month. The shallow peak flight of six occurred with normal timing on 1 October. The first Peregrine Falcon was counted on 28 August and the

last a bit early on 23 October. As usual, both *tundrius* and *anatum* birds were recorded this year.

Prairie Falcon (1). The 2009 season was a bad year all around for western raptors at the HNC hawk watch. Only one Prairie Falcon was recorded this year, an adult bird on 24 October. This is 75% below the HNC hawk watch average. The Prairie Falcon exhibits a clear pattern of

decline at Hitchcock. Once again, the number of Prairie Falcons seen at HNC is simply too small to draw any reliable conclusions about population trends.

Mississippi Kite (0). Given that it was, on the whole, a cool wet summer in the center of the United States in 2009, we weren't anticipating a good flight of these northward dispersing early season raptors. We were really, really right.

NONRAPTOR FLIGHT

Waterfowl, Shorebirds, Wading Birds, and Gulls

As always, the nonraptor season totals for the species that we annually monitor are not anywhere near as scientific as our raptor counts. Here are the 2009 totals—Great Blue Heron 13 (peak, three on two dates); American White Pelican 2,107 (peak, 675 on 27 September); Double-crested Cormorant 7,100 (peak, 1,628 on 28 September); Snow Goose 114,414 (peak, 47,700 on 4 December); Ross's Goose 261 (peak, 100 on 20 November); Franklin's Gull 3,505 (peak, 1,750 on 25 September); and Ring-billed Gull 200 (peak, 59 on 16 November). Overall, totals for this group were quite mixed. Totals for Franklin's Gulls (the counts of which annually vary in tandem with those for Swainson's Hawks) were extremely poor. Ring-billed Gull totals, along with those for Snow Geese, were down sharply. Totals for all the other species though were average or somewhat above average. The total for Ross's Geese was a new HNC hawk watch record.

Passerines and Corvids

Other than a very poor showing for Eastern Kingbird with a season total of 54 (peak of 46 on 23 August), totals for this group were either average or excellent. Falling into the average category were Blue Jay 7,678 (peak, 1,200 on 4 October) and American Crow 22,329 (peak, 8,695 on 23 October). The 2009 season total of 1,860 Red-headed Woodpeckers (peak, 521 on 6 September) was a runaway new record.

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force behind the HNC hawk watch by logging more hours banding and counting than anyone else) and to everyone else who visited HNC and participated in the 2009 hawk watch!

Raptor Banding at Hitchcock Hawk Watch 2009

Jerry Toll

RAPTOR BANDING EFFORTS

The 2009 season marked the third consecutive year of the Hitchcock raptor banding program. The effort continued to grow again this year as 164 individuals of six species of diurnal raptors was banded during capture efforts that began on 1 September and ended on 16 November. This success was due in part to the dedicated efforts of two banders and numerous volunteers, students, and visitors to the banding station.

Red-tailed Hawk was the most numerous species captured. Of the 120 Red-tailed

Hawks, 96 were hatch-year birds fledged last summer. Two Red-tailed Hawks were second-year and 22 were after-hatch-year adults. Adult captures increased sharply in mid-October as did the occurrence of western subspecies. Of this year's total, 29 were of the western subspecies, *B. j. calurus*, two were of the Harlan's subspecies *B. j. harlanii*, and 89 were of the eastern subspecies *B. j. borealis*. There were multiple examples of intergrades between the subspecies where characteristics of more than one race were evident. Five were dark morph individuals and one was a rufous or intermediate morph. The Bird Banding Lab notified us that a Red-tailed Hawk we



Raptor bander Jerry Toll holding a juvenile Northern Goshawk captured during banding efforts, Hitchcock Nature Center, Pottawattamie, 1 November 2009. Photo by Carla Alschwede, Lincoln, NE.

banded on 2 October 2008 was recovered on 15 November 2009 in South Dakota near the North Dakota border.

All three species of *Accipiter* were represented in the captures during the 2009 season. Thirty-one Sharp-shinned Hawks were banded between 14 September and 1 November, of which 21 were females and 10 were males. Their age classifications were 19 hatch-year birds, one second-year, one third-year, and 10 after-hatch-year. Of the 10 Cooper's Hawks captured between 6 September and 26 October, eight were female and two were males. Their age classifications were two hatch-years, one second-year, and seven after-hatch-year. We recaptured a female Cooper's on 26 October that was banded by us on 21 September 2008. A single hatch-year male Northern Goshawk captured on 1 November was a real treat.

Single individuals of two species of falcons rounded out the captures this year. An American Kestrel captured on 16 September was an adult female and a hatch-year female Peregrine Falcon was a captured 1 October.

In addition to our diurnal effort, we added a full-time nocturnal Northern Saw-whet Owl trapping effort this year! The season extended from 8 October to 28 November and we banded 39 owls and recaptured two more that had been banded elsewhere. Each daily trapping session extended from sunset to midnight. The season began slowly and we recorded our first capture on 15 October. The peak season, determined by the first and last night with multiple captures, was from 23 October to 26 November. The last capture was 26 November. We had a total of 33 banding sessions this year totaling 117.5 hours of effort, which yields 0.33 captures per hour. The age breakdown of captured owls was 28 hatch-year, six second-year, four after-hatch-year, and one age unknown. The gender breakdown was 33 females, two males, and four gender unknown, which illustrates a strong bias for females. Two Northern Saw-whet Owls were captured that were banded earlier in the fall at another banding station. One was banded at Hawk Ridge in Duluth, Minnesota, just 13 days earlier. It had traveled an average of 32 miles per night to reach Hitchcock! No information on the origin of the other banded owl is available yet.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank the Projects Committee of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, The Audubon Society of Omaha, and the Pottawattamie County Conservation Board for funding to support salaries and purchase replacement mist nets used in the operation for next banding season. Sandy Reinken deserves special mention as the assistant bander this season. I thank the following volunteers who generously gave their time and greatly added to the efficiency of the station: Denise Lewis and Carla Alschwede generously gave up a day a week from their busy schedules to band with us, Janis Paseka, Matt Giovanni, and Steve Van Riper were able to band occasionally.

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A Fall Record of Chestnut-collared Longspurs from Kossuth County

Cory J. Gregory

On the morning of 24 October 2009, Ashley Casey and I were birding in northcentral Kossuth County. Our goal was to find the previously reported Smith's Longspurs at the corner of 270th St. and 120th Ave. We arrived around 8:00 A.M. and quickly found several small flocks of Smith's Longspurs and a couple large flocks of the more numerous Lapland Longspurs. Shortly after 9:00 A.M., however, we heard an odd series of call notes that I immediately suspected as either McCown's or Chestnut-collared longspurs. The calls, sounding like a husky *kwid dil del*, were obviously not Smith's or Lapland longspurs. I confirmed later that these call notes also excluded the potentially similar McCown's Longspur.

I found the two birds with my binoculars flying overhead and instantly focused on the tail pattern. The retrices were indeed all pale except for black tips of the inner retrices; more black color continued further up the central retrices. Although I couldn't make out any distinguishable field marks on the head or upperparts of the birds in flight, I could see that both birds were a bland tan color underneath. There were no black tips to the wings nor were the birds brightly white underneath. The birds were the same shape and size as the surrounding longspurs in flight.

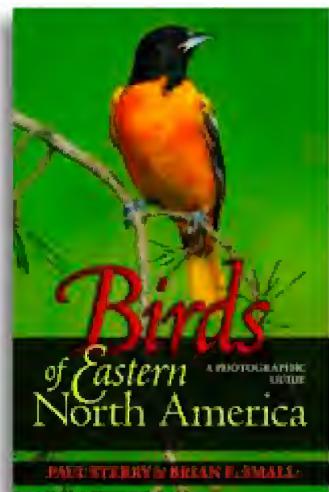
Together, both birds circled us 2–3 times and called every few seconds for a total of about 10 calls. In total, we saw the birds for about 30 seconds before they joined in with a larger flock of Lapland Longspurs at which point we lost visual and audio on both birds. We continued to search the area for another hour but could not relocate them. These birds were not relocated thereafter even though they were searched for the next day. This represents the first fall record of this species in Iowa and the first record for Kossuth County.

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Book Review

Amber N. Wiewel

Birds of Eastern North America: A Photographic Guide by Paul Sterry and Brian E. Small. 2009. 336 pp., color photographs, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, \$18.95 (paperback).



Birds of Eastern North America: A Photographic Guide was released in 2009 through the Princeton Field Guide series. The most impressive feature of this field guide is the photography. Each species account contains one to several photographs; most are large and sharp and clearly illustrate useful details for identification. The species accounts are presented taxonomically at the Order level, making it easy to find species of interest. In addition to the photographs, each species account includes a general physical description, brief information on diet and habits, detailed plumage descriptions, a description of vocalizations, its status and habitat, observation tips, and a small range map. Disappointingly, the range maps do not show migration routes or localities where vagrants have been recorded, although they do illustrate year-round, summer, and winter ranges.

The omission of migration ranges from the maps seems problematic for some species, especially for some of the shorebirds. For these species, the only ranges shown are their Arctic breeding grounds, giving no indication of where they pass through North America during migration.

The species accounts are very detailed, but rather lengthy, leaving little room for negative space. Omitting some text in favor of more white space in the margins and between accounts would have made the layout less crowded and overwhelming and easier to read. In particular, the "Observation Tips" provided at the end of each species account seem either obvious or too vague to be very useful for some species. For example, the tip for Snowy Egret and Acadian Flycatcher is "Easy to see in suitable habitats," and the tip for Black Vulture is "Hard to miss." Are these tips really that useful?

Labels on the top outer corner of each page inform the reader which taxa they are on as they flip through the guide. This feature might be especially helpful to beginning birders as they learn to navigate a field guide. Unfortunately, the photographs of the birds do not contain the short notes seen in *The Sibley Guide to Birds* or the arrows seen in Peterson field guides that quickly point out the most useful characteristics for identification. Instead, the reader must sort through the lengthy text to find the details.

One final drawback to this field guide is that the paperback version has flimsy covers that probably will not hold up well against the wear and tear most birders put their field

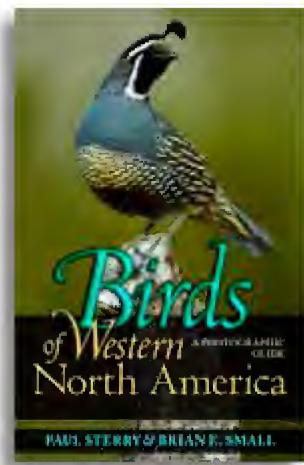
guides through. However, the paperback version is relatively inexpensive, and it would make a nice addition to any collection of bird guides, if nothing else for the beautiful photographs.

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Book Review

Cory J. Gregory

Birds of Western North America: A Photographic Guide by Paul Sterry and Brian E. Small. 2009. 416 pp., color photographs, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, \$18.95 (paperback).



Hitting the shelves in 2009, this new photographic guide isn't quite reinventing the wheel... but it's close. The title really does do this book justice; the amazing photographs are certainly the focus of this colorful field guide. This field guide is also reasonably priced and won't burn your budget. The book is average in size, a little smaller than *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, bigger than the old Peterson's guides, and nearly the same size as the *National Geographic Guide to Birds* that many of us own.

The guide, with a sharp-looking California Quail on the cover, starts out with 16 pages of introduction, one of the best I've ever seen in a field guide. Filled with bright photos of different habitats and some of the typical birds that one might find in them, it's a rich and enjoyable read. There is also a page in the introduction devoted to bird

"topography" but the pointers for "secondaries" and "primaries" on the bird in flight are misleading. For someone who wants to study the fine differences in plumages, this part of the introduction falls short.

The bulk of the book follows for the next 373 pages. Here you'll find the text and range map for each species on the left side of the spread and the bulk of the photographs on the right side of the spread. There are two to four species per spread. Also, each species has a paragraph of text that includes a basic description of adults and juveniles, voice, status and habitat, and observation tips. Each 2-page spread has a sharp, color-coded header at the top of the page that includes the family name. The photo composition is a key feature of this field guide. For example, the head and tail of the American Dipper extend above that

photograph and enter the above photograph of the Brown Creeper (although not obscuring it). Another example includes a page of wrens. The head of the Cactus Wren on the bottom of the page extends up into the photograph of the Rock Wren. The head of that Rock Wren extends up into the picture of the Canyon Wren! Clearly, the picture placement and editing crew for this guide was a creative bunch.

As with all field guides there are pros and cons. For example, there are a couple things that jump out of this guide that might make a bird enthusiast think, "Wow, I want this book." First and most obviously, the bird photography is splendid. If you've spent much time around other collections of bird pictures, the well-known bird photographer Brian E. Small is no stranger. His photographs grace many other field guides and Brian is also the photo editor for ABA's *Birding* magazine. I found the range maps to be accurate and pleasing to the eye, another plus for this guide. These range maps, which were modified from the *Birds of North America Online* maps, illustrate a bird's range with three colors: orange for the summer-only areas, purple for year-round areas, and light blue for winter-only areas. Lastly, I was impressed that the bird family names were given at the top of each page. That's something that even *The Sibley Guide to Birds* lacks.

On the other side of the spectrum, this is a photographic guide and will turn some people off. Generally, it's difficult to keep coloring and lighting constant in photographic field guides, and in this case, the scale is also incorrect for many species. At least I haven't heard of a House Sparrow the size of an Evening Grosbeak! The guide also devoted limited space to species that probably warrant much more space. For example, the highly variable Herring Gull has only half a page of text and three photographs. Of those three, only two ages of this complex 4-year gull are shown! The text accompanying each species is in block format and might be confusing for those accustomed to a larger layout. Some of the "rare" or "limited" species didn't warrant a full species account. Birds like the Altamira Oriole, Audubon's Oriole, Xantus's Murrelet, Whiskered Screech-Owl, and Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet were not given full accounts; each account was replaced by a small subheading in the text of a similar species. Photographs of most common subspecies are shown, although some of them were not included. Another quirk is the 10-page "Out of the Ordinary" section at the end of the book that hosts birds that I believe should have been placed in the main text. This guide is simply not for the Alaskan gull enthusiast because species like Ross's Gull, Ivory Gull, and Red-legged Kittiwake are placed here and will not be found in the section with the rest of the gulls.

In the end, how does this guide stack up to others? I'd say it's not bad for a beginner's photographic guide. It is similar to the *Stokes Guides* of the 1990s, except for the fancier photo compositions, larger photos, and better range maps. For a serious birder who wants more than one illustration or photograph per species, one of the more popular illustrated guides would be a better choice. I would recommend this guide for a beginner bird-watcher who is eager to see some beautiful photographs and quality range maps displayed in a user-friendly format, but not for a birder who is more interested in the finer details, photos of multiple ages, and subspecies.

Fifty Years Ago in *Iowa Bird Life*

James J. Dinsmore

Squirrels and bird feeders was the topic of the lead article in the March 1960 issue of *Iowa Bird Life*. Author Earnest Steffen provided a humorous discussion of his problems with squirrels taking over his bird feeders and his attempts to keep them away. The problem continues to plague birders 50 years later.

The report on the 1959–1960 Christmas Bird Count was the issue's longest article. A total of 92 species was found on the 22 counts held in Iowa. The species total represents a good showing for the time but is considerably fewer than the 135–140 species that have been found annually in recent years. Davenport again had the most species with 66. The two best finds were a Black Scoter in Des Moines and a Glaucous Gull in Davenport, both firsts for Iowa counts. Bald Eagles were beginning to appear on Iowa Christmas Bird Counts with 104 found on five counts, all but one along the Mississippi River. In recent years, more than 1,000 have been found in Iowa, a stark contrast to earlier years.

Among the shorter articles is one by Fred Kent on nesting American Coots at Swan Lake in Johnson County, illustrated with some of his excellent photographs of nests and young birds. In other articles, James Sieh described a Common Raven found near Lake Park in Dickinson County, the third Iowa record of that species in three years. Only two have been found in Iowa since then. Another note by Mary Ellen Warters described a Red-breasted Nuthatch nest in Des Moines, a first for Iowa and until recent years the only one. J. Donald Gillaspey had several notes, one on Bobolinks nesting on his farm near Lamoni in southern Iowa and another on wintering Short-eared Owls in the same area. In the latter he described birds that roosted there in the winter of 1958–1959. On 1 February 1959, he saw an amazing 23 Short-eared Owls in the air at one time. I wonder if anyone will ever see such a sight again.

646 Mallory Hill Dr, The Villages, FL 32162 (oldcoot@iastate.edu)

Iowa Ornithologists' Union Budget Meeting

13 December 2009

The IOU budget meeting was held at Hunt Kain and Associates, Oskaloosa, Iowa. President Steve Dinsmore called the meeting to order at 12:30 P.M. Also in attendance were Aaron Brees, vice president; Cathy Konrad, secretary; Doug Hunt, treasurer; board members Paul Roisen and Tom Schilke; committee chairs and members Ann Johnson, Hank Zaletel, Francis Moore, and Torre Hovick.

Formulation of 2010 Budget: Treasurer Doug Hunt presented the IOU budget expenditures for 2009, current as of December 11. Based on 2009 actual revenues and expenditures, committee requests, and anticipated income and operating expenses, the 2010 budget was formulated.

REVENUES

Dues: Proposed income of \$14,514 based on an estimate of 440 members.

Donations: \$1,500 proposed. This amount remains unchanged from 2009. Actual donations for 2009 were \$2,178.

Meeting and Bird Trips: These have been break-even items in the past and proposed to continue.

Sales: Sales from merchandise proposed to stay at the \$1,000 level as in 2009. Actual sales for 2009 were \$1,240. On-line sales for 2010 budget proposed at \$100. Ann Johnson noted that on-line sales for the past year were only \$70.

Total Interest Income: Treasurer Hunt proposed \$800 due to low current interest rates.

Transfer from General Operation Fund Savings: \$11,736.00 to balance the budget.

Total Operating Revenue Budgeted:
\$29,650.00

EXPENDITURES

Publications: Ann Johnson presented a Publications Committee budget request of \$16,350.00. Components of the \$16,350.00 proposed budget: Newsletter, 2,450; *Iowa Bird Life* \$12,600, Listserv \$500, software \$300 and internet service \$500. Actual publications expenses for 2009 totaled \$13,333, not including expenses for the 4th issue. Hank Zaletel and Ann Johnson discussed the IOU Flickr account. The proposed plan is to utilize event "sets" whereby members can post pictures of IOU people and events. Hank Zaletel will present additional information about Flickr at the upcoming spring meeting. Ann Johnson and Steve Dinsmore discussed the plan to incorporate additional color photographs into *Iowa Bird Life*, if appropriate. Hank Zaletel will investigate the cost of scanning past issues of *IOU News* for the electronic library.

Membership: \$500 proposed. This is down from the \$900 proposed in 2009 due to \$114 in actual expenses.

Records \$100, no change from 2009.

Library/Historical: \$25.00, no change.

Conservation/Projects: \$3,000.00 budgeted again this year. Board Member Schilke inquired if this amount could be increased if an especially worthy project was presented. The board consensus was that an especially worthy project could be considered for additional funding.

Meeting Expenses: \$1,200 proposed as a cushion in case fall and spring meetings do not break even.

Bird Trip Expenses: This has been budgeted in the past, but has been a break-even, pay-as-you-go item so no expenses requested.

Breeding Bird Atlas: \$1,000 budgeted. President Dinsmore pointed out that BBA actually provided revenue last year due to sales of BBA t-shirts. A cap will possibly be offered next year.

Sales: \$1,000 budgeted to purchase IOU clothing and related items. No change from 2009.

Officers: \$725 proposed. Actual expenses in 2009 were \$316.

Bank, PayPal Fees, Insurance: Bank and PayPal fees remain at \$325, and liability from \$400 to \$425. Treasurer Hunt reported that no bonding expenses will be incurred until 2011.

Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund: At the 17 October

2009 IOU board meeting, the IOU board voted to join a coalition of 46 conservation and outdoor recreation groups sponsoring the initiative to secure sustainable funding for outdoor recreation and conservation. This decision was then presented to the general membership at the fall business meeting. The decision as to how much money IOU should donate toward coalition publicity was discussed. Vice President Brees clarified that IOU donations would be for coalition publicity, not political lobbying. The importance of this initiative was discussed. Motion by Paul Roisen and seconded by Steve Dinsmore to donate \$5,000 with amount taken from general fund. Motion carried unanimously.

Total Operating Expenses: \$29,650.

Motion to approve the balanced budget of \$29,650 was made by Cathy Konrad and seconded by Tom Schilke. Motion carried unanimously.

Ann Johnson offered to place the budget on the IOU web site under officers' menu so committee members can easily access throughout year.

Records Committee: Ann Johnson reported that Matt Keene goes off the Records Committee this month and Aaron Brees is recommended for membership. Motion by Tom Schilke and seconded by Doug Hunt. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Cathy Konrad, secretary

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES (renewable yearly): Fledgling (students) \$15, Institutional \$45, Foreign \$35, Goldfinch \$30, Bluebird \$35, Oriole \$50, Egret \$75, Osprey \$100, Bald Eagle \$250, and Peregrine Falcon \$500+. Membership dues entitle members to receive *Iowa Bird Life* and *IOU News* quarterly and to vote and hold office in the Union. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Join, give a gift, or manage your membership on-line at <www.iowabirds.org>. Paper forms for new members and renewals may be mailed to the treasurer (see inside front cover). Back issues of *Iowa Bird Life* are available from Membership Coordinator Pam Allen, 7955 Wistful Vista Dr., #20, West Des Moines, IA 50266 (2birders@hickorytech.net).

INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS: Original manuscripts, notes, letters (indicate if for publication), editorials, and other material relating to birds in Iowa should be sent by e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word to editor. Research manuscripts should include abstract, introduction, study area, methods, results, discussion, and literature cited sections and will be sent for peer review. Accepted manuscripts will be published promptly depending on space available.

Photos and graphics: Submit only original, unsized, and unenhanced photos in your camera's JPEG (*.jpg) format. Photos must be 300 dpi at the size they will be printed (6-1/2" wide by 6-1/2" high for the cover and various smaller sizes inside), so setting your camera to its highest possible resolution is recommended. The editor will do any resizing and enhancing required because any previous adjustments to the photos may make them unusable. Submit photos and graphics as e-mail attachments.

E-mail all material other than seasonal reports to editor at cootjr@iastate.edu. Deadlines for submission are **January 1 for winter issue** (Vol. xx[1]), **April 1 for spring issue** [2], **July 1 for summer issue** [3], **October 1 for fall issue** [4]. Send seasonal field reports to field reports editors by deadlines listed on inside front cover.

IOU News Co-editors: William Scheible, 1524 Bilgarie Ct NE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402 (drbeel@mchsi.com) and Paul Hertzel, 1432 East State Street, Mason City, IA 50401 (phertzel@rconnect.com)

IOU WEB SITE: <www.iowabirds.org>, Ann Johnson, Webmaster

IOWA RBA: John Bissell (jabissell@mchsi.com)

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT: Deadline for receipt of reports is 15 January. For forms and instructions, contact Christopher J. Caster, 4 South Ridge Ct., Coralville, IA 52241 (cjcaster@earthlink.net).

BIRD SIGHTINGS: Subscribe at <www.iowabirds.org>

ADDRESS CHANGES: Update your on-line profile at <www.iowabirds.org> or send address and e-mail changes to Membership Coordinator Pam Allen, 7955 Wistful Vista Dr., #20, West Des Moines, IA 50266 (2birders@hickorytech.net).

UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION: Spring 2010: 30 April–2 May 2010, Bettendorf.

FRONT COVER PHOTO: Northern Bobwhite, near Boone, Boone, 13 September 2009. Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.

BACK COVER PHOTO: Henslow's Sparrow, Snake Creek Marsh, Greene, 2 October 2009. Photograph by Cory J. Gregory, Ames, IA.

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